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山水刊

SHAN SHUI

MOUNTAIN AND WATER PAINTING MAGAZINE

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山水

SHAN SHUI

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The Shanshui Magazine editorial and advisory board is composed of artists, scholars, and curators who share a deep commitment to fostering cultural dialogue between China and the world.
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Art is one of the deepest expressions of human thought — a way to communicate ideas, emotions, and visions of the world. Every artist, rooted in their own culture, reflects not only personal experience but also the intellectual and spiritual traditions of their society.

At Shanshui Magazine, we believe that art is a powerful tool for intercultural dialogue. By exploring the encounter between Chinese and Western artistic traditions, we aim to build bridges between two great civilizations and encourage a renewed understanding of art and nature.

Chinese shanshui (mountain and water) painting — with its 1,500 years of history — offers an alternative vision of the world, where harmony between humans and nature is central. This philosophy contrasts yet beautifully complements Western aesthetics, opening new ways of seeing and creating.

Our magazine presents contemporary Chinese and international artists, research on painting theory, and reflections on environmental aesthetics. We wish to make these ideas accessible not only to academics but to anyone curious about the living dialogue between art, ecology, and culture.

Through this magazine, we hope to promote a form of artistic expression that helps us rethink our relationship with reality, with nature, and with each other — beyond cultural boundaries.

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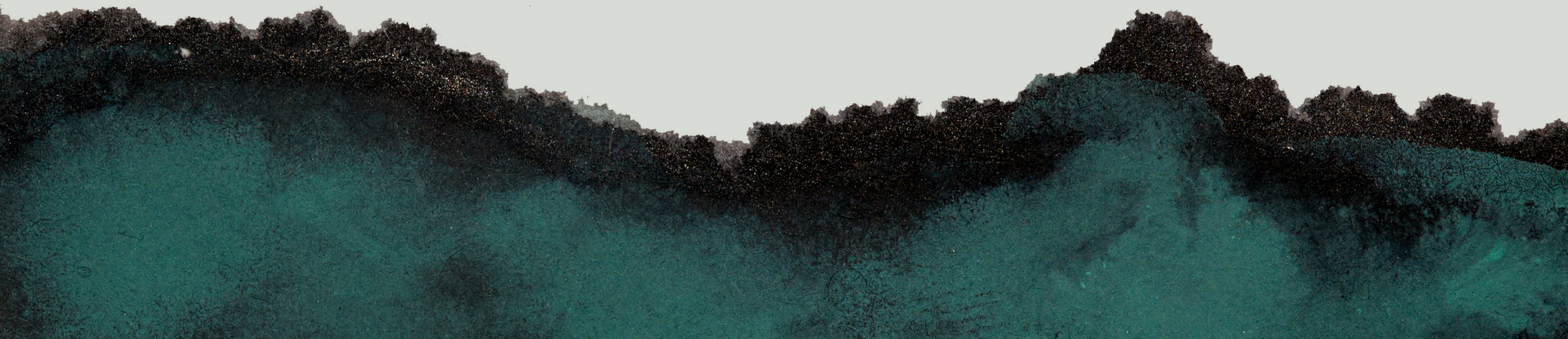


OUR APPROACH

FROM THE FIGURE OF THE CHINESE INTELLECTUAL ARTIST TO CONTEMPORANEITY.

DURING THE EIGHTH CENTURY CHINA, A NEW FIGURE OF INTELLECTUAL ARTIST WAS BORN: THIS FIGURE WOULD BECOME TOPICAL IN THE CHINESE CULTURAL PANORAMA AND MADE ITS WAY TO THE PRESENT DAY.

WENREN HUA 文人画, IS THE ONE WHO, FOLLOWING THE HUMANISTIC VALUES AND TEACHINGS OF THE TRADITION, UPDATES AND APPLIES THEM TO THE ARTISTIC-INTELLECTUAL NEEDS OF HIS TIME. THIS PROCESS HAS NEVER STOPPED, AND STILL PERSISTS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD.

THE WENREN HUA ENCOMPASSES THE POET, THE PAINTER, THE CALLIGRAPHER, THE THEORIST, THE SCHOLAR AND THE INTELLECTUAL IN GENERAL IN A SINGLE FIGURE AND SEES THE CULTIVATION OF THE SPIRIT AND MIND AS ONE OF THE MAIN PURPOSES OF HIS/HER WORK.

IN THIS WAY, A CLOSE LINK IS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN PRACTICE AND ARTISTIC THEORY; AT THE SAME TIME THERE IS NO SEPARATION BETWEEN THE ARTS, AND THERE IS A COMMON THREAD BETWEEN INTELLECTUAL PRACTICE AND MATERIAL APPLICATION.

OF COURSE THIS FIGURE IS CLOSELY LINKED TO CHINESE CULTURAL HERITAGE, BUT THIS DOES NOT MAKE IT LESS COMPATIBLE WITH THE ARTISTIC-CULTURAL NEEDS OF WESTERNIZED CONTEMPORANEITY.

IT ALSO FITS NATURALLY INTO THE TREND OF ENVIRONMENTAL AESTHETICS, WHICH IS AN EXPRESSIVE CHANNEL OF CONTEMPORARY ART OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE, GIVEN THAT THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS THAT AFFLICT OUR SOCIETY ARE OFTEN LINKED TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE DESTRUCTIVE APPROACH THAT CONTEMPORARY MEN HAVE TOWARDS IT.

RESPECT FOR NATURE AND THE NEED TO PRESERVE IT BY LIVING WITH IT IN HARMONY ARE INTRINSIC ELEMENTS OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE THOUGHT AND THAT OF THE WENREN HUA, WHICH SEE MAN AND NATURE AS TWO ELEMENTS THAT ARE PART OF THE SAME SYSTEM: IN THESE TERMS, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE HUMAN LIFE NATURAL EXISTENCE MUST ALSO BE PROTECTED, OR ELSE WE WOULD GO TOWARDS THE DECAY OF BOTH.

MANIFESTO

We find ourselves living in the era of globalization. Thanks to the infosphere that we live in, with just one click we can be in Togo, with two clicks you can be studying Sanskrit, with three you're already updated on what's going on in Bhutan, and with four more clicks you're listening to a piece played with the duduk, and immediately after we could be looking at two whirling dervishes. In half a day we become experts in Armenian music, Sufi spirituality, Himalayan geopolitics and in any other aspect of world culture.

Fantastic. Finally, a world without cultural barriers, devoted to exchange and access to mutual knowledge. In this global village without borders, we dance to the beat of superficiality, sloppy culture and of cultural arrogance, where ignorance is adorned with two-dimensional images, where the concept of "knowing that you do not know" has been abolished, although without knowing.

Ah I forgot, in this Village the chief is western, the customs and habits are mostly western, the linguistic and material means of communication are western, like almost every intellectual expression and world view of its inhabitants. The inhabitants tend to ignore what is found outside the Village, not by choice, but by condition, not out of lack of curiosity, but because of the limited means. The Village is truly global on a physical level, it truly embraces the entire earth's surface, but in fact it remains on the surface, it does not deepen, and if it deepens it does it in its own way, as it would in the centre from which it developed. In fact, the Village is ancient and full of History and histories, it has always had to do with multiculturalism, always in expansion and translation, but only recently has it reached global status.

The Village is now global, so everyone is welcome but the rules to follow are those of the village head. Everyone can bring something to the table, but it will still have to be adapted to the matrix of the Village.

With these premises, it is possible to face and analyse infinite issues concerning the actual state of the alleged globalization. Of how, for instance, it is believed to know different cultures, but that in reality this knowledge is based only on a store of empty images which are then filled with the world view of the aforementioned head of the Village. The same goes for that mercantile capitalism that has come to every corner of the globe, but that manages to give the best of itself only if it follows the needs of the Village.

We stand against a single world view, when in fact there are many. The ones that does not support diversity, but translates them, one that does not make them participate in the debate with their own voices, but accepts them only after a trial of metamorphosis. We are against the imperialism of tastes and customs, of judgment, of means of expression, and of what to express, a situation which inevitably leads to a cultural flattening. Against this self-proclaimed global Village, it does not have the ability to see neighbouring villages, since he believes that all possible villages are within him.

We as Sino-artists (mostly of non-Chinese origin, who live in China, who devote themselves to the study and practice Chinese painting, even without having a structured training of Western origin behind them), will focus on the areas concerning our cultural sphere, precisely that of Chinese art. Especially those related to painting, with a particular eye for landscape painting, which from now on we will call according to the Chinese denomination, mountain and water painting

"shanshui hua 山 水 画"

The main will is to communicate with the Village through our art and our words, trying to present one of the many shaded areas with which it is scattered. Our task is to find a language that is intelligible to the Village as well as faithful to the original meaning. Without smoothing its diversity, without avoiding clashes, without sweetening the pill. In this way it will be the Village that will make the effort to understand, and only in this way will the communication be successful. In fact, we trust in the Village's ability to understand languages not forged by itself.

The reasons that drive us in this campaign are varied and erudition is not one of those. At best it can be a side effect.

One of the biggest problems of the Village is that he believes that only movements of progress or evolutions exist inside it, only he has reached the status of "modern", and those who are not indigenous come from a static culture, backward and anchored to the past; without the use of the means forged by the Village and without its revolutionary spirit no one can participate in the dialogue of contemporaneity. So, to finally get into the subject, in the Village Chinese painting is traditional, therefore linked to the past, unable to evolve, something good just for the art history books and museums, worthy of respect, but with the same respect that is given for archaeological finds.

There is no conception of a modern or contemporary Chinese painting, also because when the term Chinese painting is pronounced, for some reason it is always accompanied by the adjective "traditional", which clearly denies the concept of modernity. Chinese art can only be defined as modern if expressed through the means and processes of modern western art.

Revelation! There is modern and contemporary Chinese art; mountain and water painting has been evolveing for at least 1500 years, and continues to evolve, and other painting exppressions are even older. As obvious as it seems, China is extremely large, therefore there are many centres of cultural irradiation, and for this

reason there are various schools within China that follow different pictorial expressions. Consequently there is not just one movement of contemporary Chinese painting.

Our main objective follows:

To spread the knowledge of contemporary Chinese painting outside of China, and to give voice to the great artists of the last century as well as to the new young artists.

Why is it important you may ask? For starters, in order to make sense of the term globalization. But above all, to enrich the Village and to redefine its ideas of intellectual absolutism.

Chinese art, together with all the other intellectual expressions of China, refers to a system of values that has come down to the present day from ancient times. This great apparatus of knowledge and ideas has influenced and is still influencing the world view of Chinese people and of course also their artistic expressions. The same discourse can be re-proposed in a general way also to the evolution of the western mind, a process that probably was less coherent than the Chinese one, which however led to the formation of various expressions of thought rooted in the conception of the world that the Village forged during its evolution. And this is exactly the key point of our reasoning, once the world interpretation system is established, it is almost impossible to get out of it, as it is invisible, and its boundaries are not recognizable. Because it being the only view you know, you believe that it is the only view that exists. Just to clarify, it's like those unfortunate people who were chained in the platonic cave. It wasn't until someone came in from the outside, did they realize the condition they were in.

This was also the case for China until the mid-nineteenth century. China behaved like the Village, just another Village that did not see those who were outside of it, except of course through its own modalities. And even though external cultural influences were accepted, it was always retranslated in Chinese terms, just like the Village does. As a consequence, there was a sense of cultural superiority compared to that which was not Chinese. Until one terrible day, when the barbarians arrived with cannons and rifles and destroyed the armies of the great empire. On that day, besides the fall of many lives, many certainties also fell in terms of value. Their system had not protected them from catastrophe, as it once did since the dawn of Chinese culture. This was not the first time that China fell into the hands of foreigners, and every time the foreigners were sinicized. Thus, their cultural continuity persisted. However, the value system was still slowly collapsing to the point where it almost disappeared. Since then it has rebuilt itself, but the system of the other foreign villages took a hold as well, strong of its modernity.

Accordingly, in contemporary China it can be said that there are two systems, the original and the imported one. The same could be said for the world of art, but art can be applied at will on any area. This has created a unique situation where the two worlds communicate with each other, sometimes one taking over the other, creating conflicts but also a very fertile ground for creativity.

It is exactly for this reason that we want to make this new system of thought known to the Village, only then will it be able to see its own boundaries, so that it will be able to ask new questions and give itself new answers.

Let's take a concrete example. The ancient western visual arts and the Renaissance up to modernity, basically acted in the field of mimesis. In painting, all the techniques to represent the visual aspect of the surrounding world comes together. Now coming back to the Village, to top it all, there was this terrifying yoke called Albertan's perspective. The Village gave a great deal of value to the sight, making it almost the only tool for perceiving reality. Establishing invisible perceptual borders because they were all-encompassing. However, at a certain point artists and intellectuals got tired of this conception and thus historical avant-garde was born. Unfortunately, not knowing any other way of perceiving the world other than the anthropocentric one of the gaze, they found themselves in a rather uncomfortable position, so much so that the path ended with destruction of the form and that of the painting itself, and having to resort to new media to be able to express themselves. It is precisely for these reasons that in contemporary era we refer to paintings as an "old lady" who keeps up with new artistic expressions with great difficulty.

So where is all this getting at? In China, the influence of western art came between the late 1800s and early 1900's. The first to arrive was via Japan, the realistic techniques of the Barbizon school. And what were the most shocking innovations for the Chinese? Mimesis, focal perspective, chiaroscuro, and all those techniques which at the time in the West were considered regressed, representatives of a system that in those years the avant-gardes despised because of its anti-contemporary expressions. Why was this seen in China as revolutionary and innovative? Because traditional pictorial theories disgusted the view and representation of form as perceived by our eyes, therefore it was an almost completely unexplored area.

China has had the good fortune of meeting and accepting a different way of interpreting the world, so why should the Village be deprived of it?

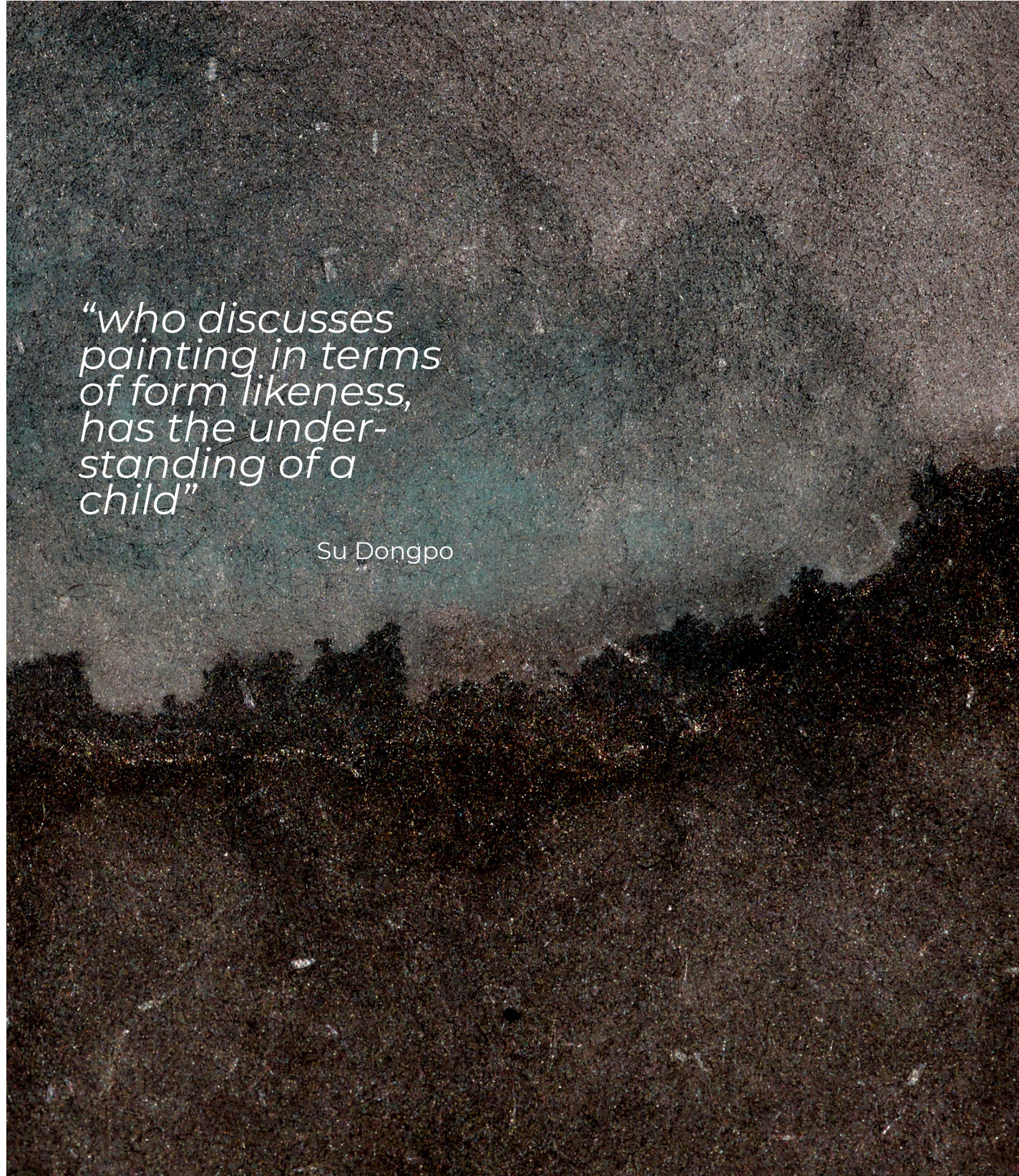
Just how much could a new way of understanding reality help the old painting of the Village? A whole world would open up, which should not mimic the Chinese one, but be inspired by it. So, we also take sides against the supremacism of sight and consequently against anthropocentrism. Our desire is to introduce these new visions, these new conceptions, and these new values. Not that the Village is completely unaware of it, but this knowledge is hidden in academic publications, accessible to those interested in the subject, but very far from the world of contemporary art or anyone else.

To conclude, we will introduce one of these intrinsic aspects of Chinese art which can be of great help and source of inspiration for our beloved Village. Why is mountain and water painting of great value in the contemporary world and why should the Village re-evaluate it? In the great pictorial experience of the Village, landscape painting as an independent genre was born late and died early. The fact that in China it is already the higher form of painting and has a millennium and a half of history should make us ask

questions about how it has probably been underestimated. Well, in reality it has not been underestimated, in fact there is no right and wrong in art, it has been evaluated according to the means that the Village head, according to the conceptions and ideas, precisely for this reason, I repeat, we must open the doors to new value systems.

Art cannot be alienated from the reality in which it is produced, and one of the most important themes for us is that of ecology, in fact this hyper capitalist Village has massacred the world in which we live and does not seem to want to take steps back. Many have already set in motion to counter this destructive madness, but there is no contest. In the Village there has recently been talk of environmental aesthetics that lashes out against anthropocentrism to concert on environmental beauties, therefore going against one, the axioms of western aesthetics since ancient Greece, against that conception that sees man as the superior creature and dominant in the ecumene. This new point of view, at least for the Village, is one of the basic aspects of Chinese ethics, philosophy and aesthetics, is found in the texts at the base of Chinese culture, at the basis of Confucian philosophy and Daoist thought and continues to be repeated until modern times, conception that does not just appreciate environmental beauties, but its holistic conception of the universe puts man on the same level as any other creation of nature. In *Yi Zhuan* 易传 (5th century BCE), a commentary on *Yi Jing* 易经, it is written that “the greatest virtue of heaven and earth is life” (天地之大德曰生), that is to say that the greatest virtue is to create an environment where all life forms and natural elements can coexist in harmony.

For this reason, too, the category of still life does not exist in Chinese painting, in fact for the Chinese artist it would be absurd to paint lifeless subjects.
For these and other reasons, the Village and the artists that reside in it will benefit from learning Chinese art. Mountain and water painting will inspire them, the beauty of nature will awaken the minds and set the minds in motion. The boundaries of the Village will begin to appear and we can finally begin to break them down.



Attributed to Wang Wei 王维 (701-761), Snowy Stream 雪溪图
Part of a handscroll. Ink and color on silk, Formerly Manchu Household Collection, Beijing, now lost.

Reclusive culture in Chinese Mountain and Water painting

(the article has been part of the interventions of the 27th -29th November 2020 conference: The Annual Kurultai of the Endangered Cultural Heritage - AKECH 3rd edition; The Annual Lecture on Exile in Comparative Literature and the Arts - ALECLA 3rd edition)

By; Giacomo Bruni

Origins of the Reclusive culture

Reclusive culture *yinshi wenhua*隐士文化 is an important branch of Chinese traditional culture with distinctive characteristics and far-reaching influence, till the contemporary times. The reclusive culture has basically taken shape in the pre-Qin period, in particular in a historical phase that includes the period of Springs and Autumns 春秋時代 *Chunqiu shidai* (722-481) and of the Warring States 战国 *Zhanguo* (453-221). The latter was a period of violence, characterized by political and social instability, but also of great cultural richness and creativity, which led to the birth or theoretical formalization of the many currents of thought, giving light to the Hundred Schools of Thought 诸子百家 *Zhuzi baijia*, of which Confucian and Daoist will become fundamental pillars of Chinese culture. Since this historical moment there are relevant records of hermits 隐士, both from Confucian and Daoist sources, characters such as Chang Ju 长沮 and Jie Yong 桀溺 in the Confucian classics the Analects of Confucius, *Lunhua* 《论语》 and in the Taoist classic Zhuangzi 庄子, there are fables of reclusive people who cherish Daoism, such as Xu You 许由 and Shan Juan 善卷, who rejected the throne for a simple and carefree life. At a time when taking up a government post could be a dangerous choice for one's own safety, retirement from social life became a choice by the intelligentsia of the time. Even in the Confucian context, where social participation was one of the fundamental aspects of the intellectual's life, the choice of the hermitage was accepted, naturally always following the teachings of Confucius, therefore for the purposes of self-cultivation, ethically and morally, but always with the idea of returning to participate in socio-political life with a deep commitment of social responsibility. Otherwise, the Daoist hermit, while always having the purpose of self-cultivation, saw the secular world as a world from which to move away, in order to enter into a relationship of communion and contact with nature, developing the most intimate aspects of his personality, preferring spontaneity, therefore acting free from utilitarianism. This vision also includes the Daoist concept of *wuwei* 无为, or acting without effort, from which the topical association with water was born, which has no shape, has complete freedom of movement and despite being weak it can erode the stone. Concept close to that of carefree wandering, *xiaoyao you* 逍遥游, conceived by Zhuangzi himself, a carefree existence requires goal-free wandering, only by forgetting the boundaries of the object and self, reaching the realm of selflessness, futility and anonymity is possible to reach the real "carefree travel".
One of Zhuangzi's Daoist tales in the section of 《秋水 - The Floods of Autumn》 tells us:

Zhuangzi was (once) fishing in the river Pu, when the king of Chu sent two great officers to him, with the message, 'I wish to trouble you with the charge of all within my territories. Zhuangzi kept on holding his rod without looking round, and said, 'I have heard that in Chu there is a spirit-like tortoise-shell, the wearer of which died 3000 years ago, and which the king keeps, in his ancestral temple, in a hamper covered with a cloth. Was it better for the tortoise to die, and leave its shell to be thus honored? Or would it have been better for it to live, and keep on dragging its tail through the mud? ' The two officers said, 'It would have been better for it to live, and draw its tail after it over the mud.' 'Go your ways. I will keep on drawing my tail after me through the mud. ' (Legge, 1891)

庄子钓于濮水，楚王使大夫二人往先焉，曰：「愿以境内累矣！」庄子持竿不顾，曰：「吾闻楚有神龟，死已三千岁矣，王巾笥而藏之庙堂之上。此龟者，宁其死为留骨而贵乎，宁其生而曳尾于涂中乎？」二大夫曰：「宁生而曳尾涂中。」庄子曰：「往矣！吾将曳尾于涂中。」《庄子-外篇- 秋水》

This episode in addition to illustrating the character of the hermit who moves away from the burdens and honors of secular life, describes Zhuangzi while fishing, which clearly recalls the figure of the fisherman who will become of great importance in the panorama of reclusive culture. The fisherman, a solitary figure closely linked to water, is the natural hermit, so his vision of the world and lifestyle is the one to follow. In《楚辞 - Chu Ci》, a text traditionally attributed in part to Qu Yuan 屈原(c. 340-278), a Chinese poet and politician who lived during the Warring States period, relates an episode when the exiled Qu Yuan complains with a fisherman of the secular world:

The fisherman: “Sages do not cling to things, but can move on with the world. The world is turbid, why don't you stir up the mud and spread the waves." (Legge, 1891)

渔父曰：“圣人不凝滞于物，而能与世推移。世人皆浊，何不淈其泥而扬其波?《楚辞 • 渔父》

Qu Yuan then replied him, but the fisherman goes away singing and smiling without answering. This episode illustrates the wisdom of the fisherman who finds no interest in the affairs of the secular world or in complaining about it. The same can be said of the figure of the mountaineer/woodcutter 樵夫 *qiaofu*, who, like the fisherman, spends his life in the isolation of the mountains surrounded by nature, giving no importance to the secular world. The figure of the fisherman and the woodcutter will acquire a great deal of importance in the imaginary of reclusive cultures, so much so that they become topical figures.

Reclusive culture and the rising of mountain and water painting

In 221 BCE the phase of instability ends with the establishment of the Qin empire 秦朝, which after only 15 years will be replaced by the Han dynasty 汉朝 (202BCE-220CE), which will be in power for about 400 years, apart from a brief interruption from 9 to 23 when the Xin dynasty 新朝 took over. These four centuries of Chinese history were characterized by a Confucian-based ideological setting, which as we have said gave great importance to the political and social participation of the individual, therefore the ideals of the reclusive culture, but also more generally the Daoist teachings became minorities in the intellectual scene of the time. Things began to change in the years of the decline of the Han dynasty and after its fall, when a situation of instability and violence due to conflicts returned, there was a revival of the Daoist and reclusive culture. This period, which ends with the establishment of the Sui dynasty at the end of the sixth century, was another era of cultural innovation and creativity, Buddhist thought had entered China during the Han dynasty, and during the following era it had its first true development in China, which then among other things will lead to the birth of Chan (Zen) Buddhism 禅宗 *Chanzong*, which was greatly influenced by Daoist teachings. Characteristic of the Wei-Jin 魏晋 period (220-420) was the philosophical movement called *Xuanxue* 玄学, which had a great influence, which took up the texts of the origins of Daoism and the *Yijing* 《易经》and reinterpreted them according to the needs of the time taking into account also considering Confucian teachings and in particular the Buddhist ones, a form of thought that among other things gave importance to reclusive culture and the figure of the hermit. Wei-Jin period was a turbulent period in China's feudal society. National contradictions intensified, wars were frequent, dynasties changed constantly, Confucian ethics collapsed, sectarian struggle was cruel, high ranked were killed one by one, scholars were precarious and anxious, the wind of Xuanxue flourished and Buddhism and Laozi thought prevailed. At this time, the hermit thought and culture had a great development, so the literati who avoided disaster began to face the nature, went into the mountain forests and countryside, enjoyed the beauty of the woods and springs.

The revival of reclusive culture and the appreciation for wild nature led to the birth of mountain and water painting, *shanshui hua*山水画 as an independent genre, abandoning the ancillary position towards figurative painting, which at the time was the highest form of painting. Mountain and water painting as an independent genre was born in close relation with the Daoist theories, Xuanxue thinking and of reclusive culture.

Life in the wilderness inevitably led to isolation from society, but at the same time it led to a liminal environment that lies between the material and spiritual world, where one can meet supernatural or immortal beings, the *shenxian* 神仙 who live following the “Way” (the *Dao* 道) naturally, fully applying the concept of carefree wandering. The mountains and wild forests become places of threshold where the concepts of space and time disappear, where the existential modalities of reclusive culture can be fully applied, in order to reach higher levels of union with the natural world, an intimate relationship, which leads to another fundamental concept of Daoist thought, but also Buddhist and Confucian, that of the tianren heyi 天人合一 that is the unity between man and the sky, a holistic vision of the universe that sees man and nature on the same level, without one having supremacy over the other, where the well-being of the elements that form the universe acting in communion is greater than that of the individual elements taken separately. Seclusion is also based on this: the compatibility and integration of man and nature, and the mutual connection. Daoism thinking believes that this kind of harmony eventually leads to the Dao, the “Way”, and only with a clear mind can it fit in and reach the highest aesthetic realm. Harmony has become the basic requirement of Chinese art.

The first theorists and artists who dedicated themselves to mountain and water painting moved in this context. The first theorist was Zong Bing 宗炳 (375-443), with his Introduction to *Mountain and Water Painting, Hua shanshui xu,* 《画山水叙》 an extremely dense short text, which reveals the secrets of mountain and water painting, which will lay the foundations for the development of this practice as artistic. Zong Bing is himself a hermit at Mount Lu, *Lushan* 庐山 devoted to Buddhism, disciple of Hui Yuan 慧远 (334-416), a great master of the Chinese Buddhist tradition who also founded the White Lotus society *Bailian she* 白莲社 on Mount Lu, dedicated to translating and studying the Buddhists sutras. The cultural environment of Lushan at the time, but also in subsequent eras, was of great importance, in fact the area was inhabited by various hermits or in any case it was a stop for scholars and itinerant sages, where they met and

exchanged their philosophical ideas, both whether they were of Confucian, Daoist or Buddhist training. These exchanges were very important for the subsequent development of Chinese philosophical thought, so much so that the meeting between Hui Yuan, Tao Yuanming 陶渊明 (352/365-427) and Lu Xiujing 陆修静 (406-477), called *Three laughs at Tiger Brook, Huxi sanxiao* 虎溪三笑, became idiomatic. These three exponents of the three main currents of thought of the time had one day met and had a long and fruitful conversation, so fruitful that it lead Hui Yuan to cross the Huxi, a stream that he never crossed, but they were so absorbed in their talk that they did not realize they had passed it. This story is important because it describes the fervent intellectual activity of the time, characterized by cultural syncretism, where the reclusive culture that was at the basis of the theory of mountain and water painting flourished. In fact, Tao Yuanming with his pastoral poetry was one of the greatest spreaders and supporters of the reclusive culture of the time, and of the withdrawal from society for a quiet life, so much so that his works and himself became one of the topoi of the artistic expression of the wenren 文人, the literati, when they emerged in the Chinese cultural landscape, made the theories of reclusive culture their own.

Zong Bing follows and spreads the teachings of Hui Yuan, whom he considers a *shengren* 圣人, that is a sage who has reached the highest level of knowledge, who naturally lives according to the "Way", who lives in the Dao without effort, like the immortals who eventually populate the wild mountains. Zong Bing considers himself a *xianzhe* 贤者, a wise and virtuous man, who follows the teachings of the shengren but who cannot follow the Dao effortlessly but must seek it, and it is precisely for the purpose of this search and will to reach the "Way" who dedicates himself to painting of mountains and water, through life in the mountains, even itinerant, and the painting of the environment that surrounds him manages to experience and enjoy the benevolence ren 仁 and the highest wisdom *zhi* 智, status that the shengren can reach naturally simply by living in the mountains. This is the core of Zong Bing's text, which explains the motive and purpose of applying to mountain and water painting. The Dao is invisible, but it is present, through the pictorial practice, the form of the natural environment that is represented, is only a means to represent it, so you must not be a slave to visual perception, otherwise it would be like reading a metaphor literally, ignoring its true meaning, which goes beyond the words used. The invisible but perceptible element, that which has no form, becomes fundamental, characteristic and essential in the painting of mountains and water, which less than a century later will be standardized as *qiyun shengdong* 气韵生动, the resonance of the spirit, the first of the six rules of Xie He谢赫 (5th century) which became and is the main focus of the Chinese painter. Hence a long and rich speculation on the concept of image beyond the image *xiang wai zhi xiang* 象外之象, that the essence of what surrounds us goes beyond its image, and its material perception. Another important aspect that transpires from Zong Bing's text is that of the importance of the state of mind with which one approaches nature and then in the practice of painting. Fundamental is the tranquility of heart (mind, soul), the heart that unites external vision and internal perception, the state of tranquility, which is more easily reached in a situation of isolation from society, creates a synchrony and harmony between the environment (the world)

2

Jing Hao 荆浩 (ca. 850-911), Zhongli Quan Seeking the Dao 钟离访道图立轴
Silk 147×74.8 cm, Freer Art Collection

and the most intimate part of the subject, only thanks to the achievement of this status it is possible to see/perceive the reality of things, breaking the barriers of space and time and achieving happiness. Here we see the theories of Zhuangzi's carefree wandering and of how painting is one of the ways to reach and express one's personality, heart, mind, state of mind, etc. which also leads the observer of painting to experience this state of happiness and perception of the Dao. In the final section of the Introduction to painting of mountains and waters Zong Bing writes:

In moments of relaxation, after having put my mind in order, emptied a glass of wine or strummed the lute, I unroll a painting and sit in front of it and without leaving the crowded houses of men I find myself wandering in solitude, in wild lands, with no trace of human beings. Mountain peaks rise above the mists and clouds, gorges and forests extend into the distance. The wise and virtuous shine from antiquity, and all the interesting aspects of life come together in the mind. What else do I need? Being in this state I am happy and delighted, what more can I ask for? (translation mine)

于是闲居理气，拂觞鸣琴，披图幽对，坐究四荒，不违天励之藂，独应无人之野。峰岫峣嶷，云林森眇。圣贤暎于绝代，万趣融其神思。余复何为哉，畅神而已。神之所畅，熟有先焉。

Another very important figure of the period who contributed to the theoretical structuring of mountain and water painting was Wang Wei 王微 (414-453), who in his *Xuhua*《叙画》 expresses the need to have a more emotional, intimate and personal aesthetic approach towards the environment and in artistic expressions.

New political stability and mountain and water painting

At the end of the sixth century China regained its stability and political unity, first with the brief phase of about 40 years of the Sui dynasty 隋朝 (581-618) and then with the period of the Tang dynasty 唐朝 (618-907), characterized by peace and prosperity, which favors the flourishing of the arts. The first works of mountain and water painting that have come down to us come from the Sui-Tang phase, the first technical form was that of blue-green mountain and water painting *qinglü shanshui* 青绿山水, the hermit practice had lost the momentum of the precedent period, precisely because of the rediscovered social peace, but its themes and purposes had remained and will always remain present in the contents and pictorial theory of mountain and water painting. The first works characterized by the use of green and blue, have a great formal care and often we find themes that recall the life of immortals or supernatural beings in the wild mountains, which are clear references to Zhuangzi's carefree wandering. With peace and prosperity, the material needs to choose a life far from society had declined, but the ideals remained, even at the level of the imperial court, where palaces with gardens were built that reproduced life among unspoiled nature. A similar process is the one that accompanies the birth of the gardens of the literati or wenren, which served to re-propose the hermit experience within the secular world. Wang Wei 王维 (701-761) (Fig.1), poet, musician, man of letters, painter, but also a statesman and adept of Chan Buddhism, gave rise to the figure of the literate painter *wenren hua* 文人画 or School of South *Nanzong* hua 南宗画, who stood out from the professional painter, technically much more formal and academic, who most often was a court painter, called School of the North *Beizong hua* 北宗画. This new conception of painting fully expressed the theories of reclusive culture, even on a technical and formal level, with the use of broken ink *pomo fa* 破墨法 it gave more expressive freedom to painting, and inaugurated the taste of monochromatic mountain and water painting, which characterized much of the production of wenren hua. Also, thanks to Chan's theories, he made paintings, but also poetry, more subjective and intimate, where the representation of the natural environment served to express the artist's feelings. The figure of the literate artist made his own the philosophy of reclusive culture, trying to follow his lifestyle even if he was forced to live in contact with the secular world.

The post-Tang epoch, the Five dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period 五代十國 (907-979) and the Song dynasty 宋朝 (960-1279), were also characterized by peace and prosperity, and in particular saw the maturity of mountain and water painting, both by painters of court or professionals, who inherited the techniques of blue-green and gold-green mountain and water painting, and from the wenren hua, who carried forward the vision of Wang Wei and the reclusive culture. Although it was an era of peace and political stability, some figures of the artistic panorama chose a life as a hermit, the most famous are the painter and theorist Jing Hao 荆浩 (ca. 850-911) (Fig.2), who wrote a milestone in the pictorial theory of mountain and water, the *Bifa ji*《笔法记》 who spent his life as a hermit on Mount Taihang *Taihang shan* 太行山, and Fan Kuan 范宽 (950-1032) that dwelt on Zhongnan mountains *Zhoongnan shan* 终南山 and Mount Hua *Taihua shan* 太华山, both were Daoists, who decided to spend their lives in the mountains in order to better understand the secrets and mysteries, bringing the painting of mountains and water at levels never reached before and difficult to reach in the future, also creating a technical and formal apparatus that will be fundamental for the following generations of painters. Guo Xi 郭熙 (ca. 1000-1090), one of the most important figures in the history of Chinese painting, creator of works of the highest level, was the author of *Essay on Mountain and Water Painting, Linquan gaozhi*《林泉高致》, a text that is also fundamental for the theoretical structuring of mountain and water painting. In the text Guo Xi among other things defines the importance of mountain and water painting precisely because in a flourishing and stable era it would be a sin to abandon the state and the family, so thanks to painting, both the artist and the observer can experience life far from society, be transported to nature and enjoy solitude. (Fig.3)
In the Linquan gaozhi he writes:

It is in human nature to feel the hustle and bustle of society and desire to see spirits and immortals hidden in the clouds. In times of peace, under a good emperor and excellent parents, it would be wrong to leave to be alone, because there are duties and responsibilities that cannot be ignored [...]. The dream to retreat in the forests and springs and to find oneself in the company of clouds and mists is always there, but the eye and ear are deprived of it. Now a good hand has reproduced them for us. Without leaving your room you can imagine yourself sitting on the rocks in a gorge and listening to the screaming of monkeys and birdsongs; while the light of the mountains and the colors of the water dazzle the eyes. Isn't it a joy, a realization of a person's dream? This is why mountain and water paintings are so in demand.

Approaching these paintings without the necessary mood would mean ruining this magnificent view and clouding the refreshing breeze. (Lin Yutang, 1967)

尘嚣缰锁，此人情所常厌也；烟霞仙圣，此人情所常愿而不得见也。直以太平盛日，君亲之心两隆，苟洁一身，出 处节义斯系，岂仁人高蹈远引，为离世绝俗之行［...］。然则林泉之志，烟霞之 侣，梦寐在焉，耳目断绝。今得妙手郁然出之，不下堂筵，坐穷泉彗星 猿声鸟啼，依约在耳山光水色，混漾夺目。此岂不快人意，实获我心哉？此世之所以贵夫画山之本意也。不此之主而轻心临之，岂不芜杂神观，混浊清风也哉！

Furthermore, Guo Xi in his text re-presents the fisherman and the carpenter as topical figures of the reclusive culture, the one that the noble man seeks through the arts, since he is unable to do so by the secular world:

Why is it that a gentleman loves nature? The reason is that he usually lives in a house and garden, enjoys whistling over rocks and streams, loves to see fishermen, woodcutters and recluse scholars, and enjoys the company of monkeys and cranes. (Lin Yutang, 1967)

君子之所以爱夫山水者，其旨安在？丘园养素，所常处也；泉石啸傲，所常乐也；渔樵隐逸，所常适也；猿鹤飞鸣，所常亲也。

Later on, again in the first chapter of Linquan gaozhi, Guo Xi exposes how the mountain environment should be experienced and lived, he wrote four different ways of relating to it, or sike 四可, four ways of experiencing and expressing it. Guo Xi writes:

It has been truly said, that among the landscapes there are those fit to walk through, those fit to contemplate, those fit to ramble in and those fit to live in. All pictures may reach these standards and enter the category of the wonderful; but those fit to walk through or to contemplate are not equal to those fit to ramble in or to live in it. (Siren, 1963)

世之笃论，谓山水有可行者，有可望者，有可游者，有可居者。画凡至此，皆入妙品。但可行可望不如可居可游之为得。

Those works that are able to give a sensation of traveling *keyou* 可游 or that of living in the mountains *keju* 可居, are the better works, since they are able to communicate the ways of experiencing the natural environment of the reclusive culture, which is the most intimate, in-depth and engaging way, which leads to establishing a close relationship with the mountains and the waters. It should be remembered that the importance and the pleasure of traveling in the mountains is a concept already expressed by Zong Bing, who had embraced the hermit lifestyle. In the *Hermits*, *Yimin si,* section of the Taiping Yulan (《四部 丛刊三编》 本 《太平御览》 ： 逸民四) these words are reported: “Every time I visit the mountains and waters, I forget to return “, 每游山水，往辄忘归.

Revival of the reclusive culture in Yuan dynasty

At the end of the Song dynasty, a new period of instability begins, for about a century the Chinese empire was led by the Mongolian populations, who engaged in a bloody struggle for power. Chinese intellectuals and writers, on the one hand, felt culturally uprooted because a foreign population was at the head of their civilization and therefore began to no longer appreciate political participation, both for ideological factors and for the material risks that were run in the hold official positions. Once again, the response of the Chinese intelligentsia to the socio-political crisis was the choice of a secluded life away from the active society. In the Yuan era 元朝 (1271-1368) the painting of mountain and water had reached its splendor, the literate artists had imposed themselves on the Chinese cultural landscape, naturally the turbulent historical moment had awakened hermit desires, the union of these elements led to the creation of a large amount of works that refer to the reclusive culture, as the painters chose a hermit lifestyle. This lifestyle was no longer as easily attainable as it was during the Wei-Jin period. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries China was much more urbanized than during the Wei-Jin, and leaving the secular world was a more difficult choice to make. However, the painters of the Yuan era, even if they were unable to have a completely secluded lifestyle, strongly used the types and ideas of the reclusive culture. The four greatest mountain and water painters of the Yuan dynasty, *yuan sijia* 元四家, were all four literati and more or less followers of Daoism, all chose a secluded lifestyle, trying as much as possible to keep away from the world secular. These four great artists were Huang Gongwang 黄公望 (1269-1358), Wu Zhen 吴镇 (1280-1354), Wang Meng 王蒙 (1308-1385), Ni Zan 倪瓒 (1301-1374), and , who through their works re-proposed themes and topoi of the reclusive culture, such as the fisherman, became Wu Zhen's favorite theme (Fig.4), as for the woodcutters, Wang Meng signed himself as the “woodcutter of Huanghe shan” 黄鹤山樵, where he spent his years as a hermit. The lonely trees and thatched cottages *xushe* 茅舍, traditionally were narrative topoi that recalled the hermits world, and are often found in the works of Ni Zan, who besides being a great painter was an excellent

Guo Xi 郭熙 Two pine Water Pavilion 双松水阁图
Silk, 167.7 x 53.6, Shanghai Museum, China

calligrapher and poet, in the full spirit of the wenren hua. Also in Huang Gongwang's works we find all the themes of reclusive culture, in his famous *Dwelling in the Fu Chun Mountains, Fuchunshan ju tu* 《富春山居图-无用师全卷》 (Fig.5) which is a work that is the result of years of study and four of painting of the area in which Huang Gongwang had retired, the painting represents the mountain and river area of Fuchun mountain, the use of ink and brush reflects the mental state of tranquility reached by the painter thanks to a life in solitude. In the painting it is possible to find all the topical elements of the reclusive culture, the fishermen, a thatched cottage with a man of letters intent on admiring the landscape. The lightness of the lines, the wide empty spaces and the delicacy of the ink communicates a feeling of peace and silence, expressing the artist inner world. The observation of this work puts us in the state of the hermit, making us relive his experiences, transporting us between the mountains and the waters, as indicated by Zong Bing or Guo Xi.

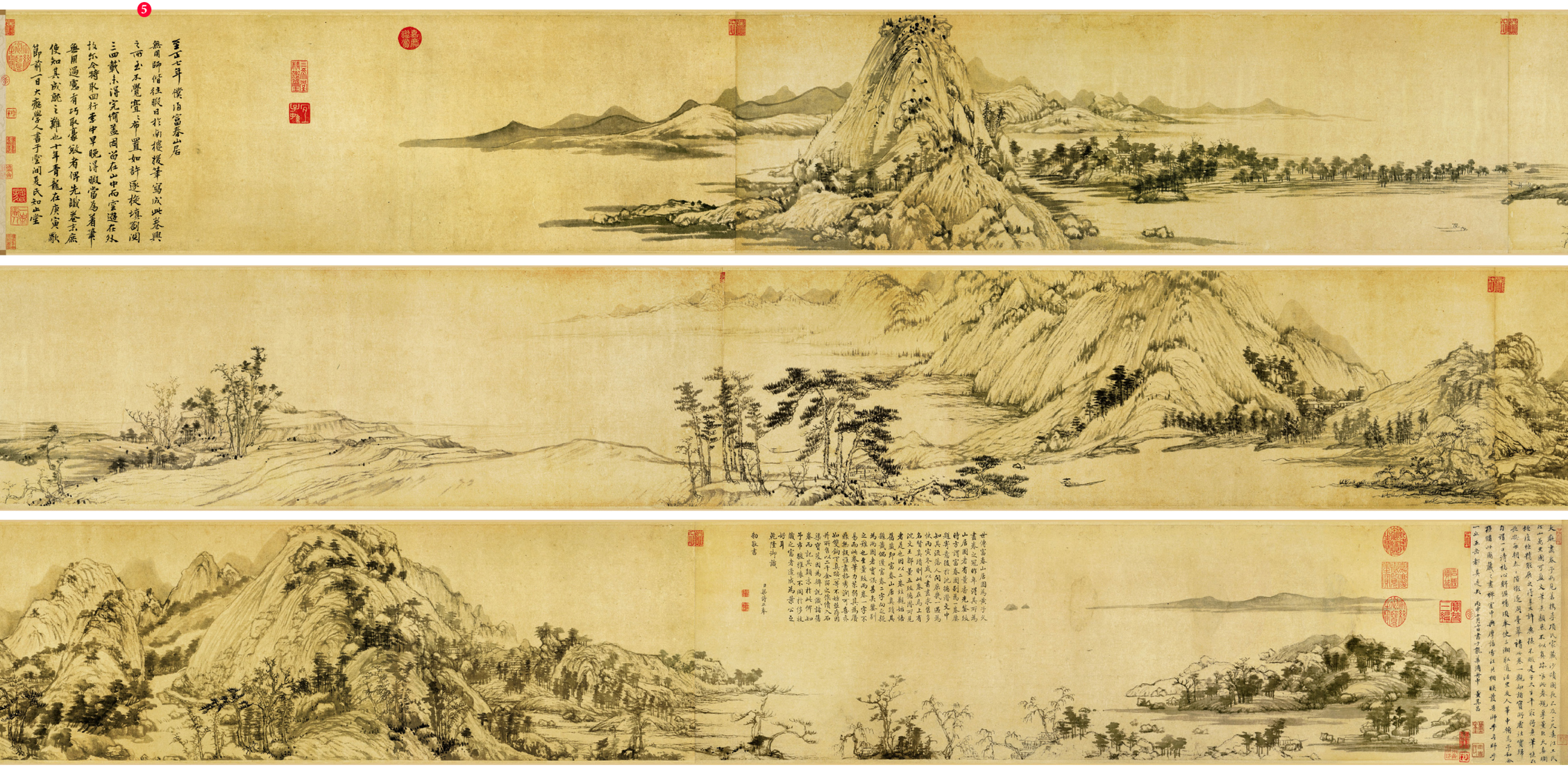
Conclusion

We see how reclusive culture is extremely important and present in the Chinese cultural landscape, at least since the Spring and Autumn period, where the figure of the Chinese hermit is structured, who sees his adversity to government and public life as the first fundamental characteristic. Therefore automatically, everything that entails, such as social utilitarianism, the thirst for power and wealth, and all elements that ultimately lead to a life of trouble strays from the main purpose, which is essentially the pursuit of happiness. The aversion to social life is clear in moments of political instability, where the reclusive culture becomes a sort of protest of the intellectual towards the system, literate artists who from the period of the Wei-Jin lived far from the secular world, but did not live in complete loneliness, indeed they almost created a new cultural network alternative to that of the governments, which opposes the struggles for power and materialism, a cultural network that is very rich and dynamic, much more dynamic than the one that gravitates around the secular world, which when shaken by instability and violence, becomes arid and monolithic. This is even more evident in the last period taken into consideration, namely that of the Yuan dynasty, where a high level of social evolution made it more difficult to reach the status of the hermit, a factor that gave great strength to the hermit topoi born during the Chinese cultural history and were used by writers as symbols against the political situation of the time to spread the conceptions and ideas of reclusive culture. The case of mountain and water painting is of particular interest, since it sees the birth of a genre and its evolution within this cultural class, from which it took its theoretical-philosophical bases and carried them forward to the contemporary age, profoundly influencing a class of intellectuals, the wenren, who have written a fundamental part of the cultural and artistic history of China, and who continue to do so in the contemporary world, clearly adapting to the times, but pursuing ideals that perhaps have never been more vital than now. The search for communion and balance with nature and attention to the feelings of the individual is of utmost importance. Therefore, we need a strong sense of humanity and the abandonment of utilitarianism and materialism, and the stigmatism of the race for power, the accumulation of riches, which are the root causes of what's destroying the world we live in.

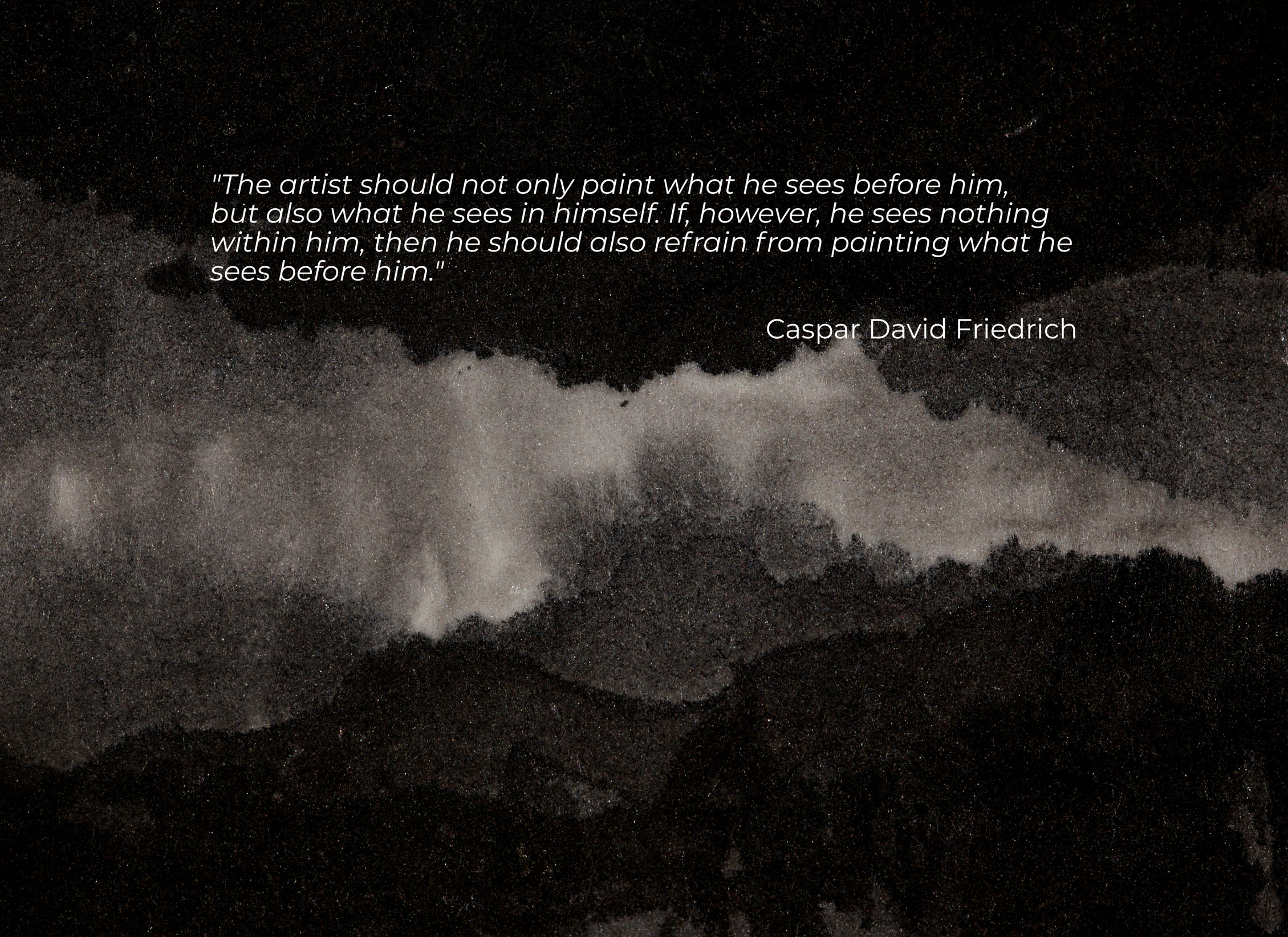
Wu Zhen 吴镇 (1280-1354), Fisherman 渔父图
Hanging scroll ink on silk 84.7x29.7cm,Collection of the Palace Museum

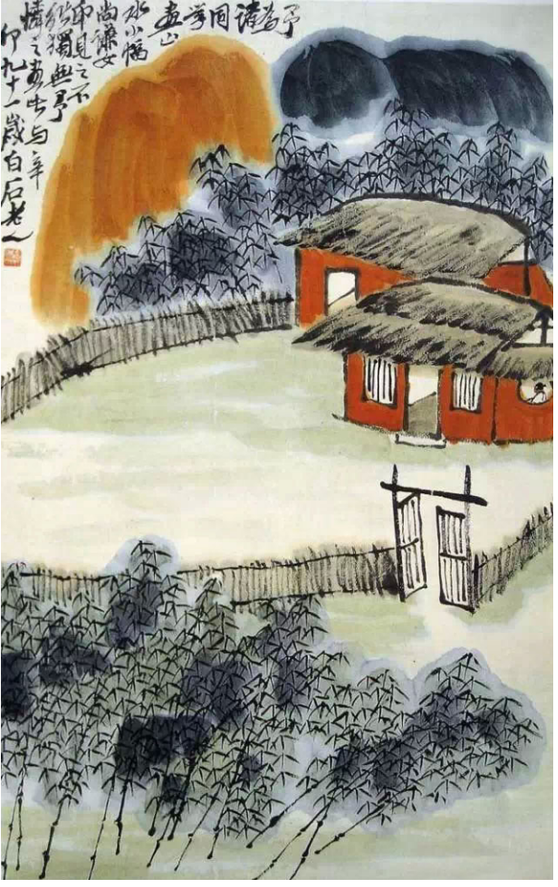
4

Wu Zhen's *Fisherman* is one of the most typical mountain and water painting with the theme of "fishing and reclusing" 渔隐. There are many pictures of *Fisherman* handed down by Wu Zhen. The picture depicts the scenery of the south Vhina (Jiangnan) water areas, bushes and trees, a fisherman rides a small boat among the lakes and rivers. In the whole picture, the ink tone is lush, and the mountains, rocks, trees, branches and leaves are characterized by the alternating use of the ink tones in order to express the hierarchical relationship and highlight the main objects. Variety of brushwork, texture strokes, the lines and the dots, can show the author's superb control ability. The secluded and quiet mood between the lakes and mountains is vividly on the paper, giving a sense of being far away from the mundane.



Huang Gongwang 黄公望 (1269-1358)
Dwelling in the Fu Chun Mountains, Fuchunshan ju tu (Master Wuyong Scroll) 《富春山居图-无用师全卷》
Ink and color on paper
Full roll 965.67X33.64 - Picture core 652.4X33.64 cm
Taipei Palace Museum


"The artist should not only paint what he sees before him, but also what he sees in himself. If, however, he sees nothing within him, then he should also refrain from painting what he sees before him."
Caspar David Friedrich



Qi Baishi 齐白石 (1864-1957)
Mountain and Water 《山水小幅》 1951

The *bifa* concept in Jing Hao's *Bifaji*

A brief study of its continuity and significance in Mountains-and-waters painting (Part II)

By; Claudio D. Lucchi

2.4. *Bifa's* universal character

As it sets out to explore Jing Hao's bifa concept, what may strike a Western mind more than anything else might well be its universal character. It relies on the cosmic vision developed by Chinese philosophers since ancient times, which has greatly influenced Chinese aesthetics and arts up to our present day.

It is important to grasp the essence of the Chinese worldview, given that it strongly differs from the Christian one and has thus given birth to a system of thought which might be described as "subtly different" since it sometimes appears to reach results and conclusions similar to those proposed in the West and yet does so while relying on very disparate fundamentals.

It might here suffice to cite two extracts, the first from Lao Zi's *Daode Jing* 《道德经》, and the second one from Liu An's *Huainanzi* 《淮南子》:

The Tao produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three; Three produced All things.[1]
道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。[2]

One is the origin of all creatures, it is the Dao under its absolute form.
一也者，萬物之本也，無敵之道也。《淮南子・詮言訓》[3]

According to this philosophical vision, the origin of all things and of the world itself proceeds from the Absolute One (yi 一) which, according to Pierre Ryckmans[4], stands for the Absolute in its original state before it divided, thus giving birth to the myriad things (*wanwu* 萬物) that fill the universe. As already noted above, something analogous to cosmic creation happens in painting : starting from plain silk or paper, the painter "reenacts" the creative process by gradually dividing heaven and earth and giving life and shape to all things within his microcosm, i.e., his painting. According to François Jullien, Chinese painters "do not invent a world other than this one". They take care not to "alter or even disturb its coherence" but rather "join with that coherence through painting".[5]

Jullien goes one step further and concludes that having "carefully balanced" and perfected Chinese painting over the centuries, Chinese painters now seem content to simply maintain and perpetuate it, constantly reasserting its guiding principles.[6] To further illustrate this point, Jullien draws on some selected statements by the famous 20th century painter Qi Baishi 齐白石 (1864-1957).

From a purely painterly standpoint, one may wonder why Jullien chose to cite Qi Baishi instead of Huang Binhong 黄宾虹 (1865-1955), whose impressive literary corpus on Chinese painting certainly surpasses that of his contemporary. If this might additionally demonstrate how Huang Binhong's oeuvre still seems to tarry in a state of half-light both in China and abroad, while Qi Baishi's work enjoyed (and still does enjoy) greater and more widespread reputation already during both mens' artistic career, Jullien's choice of reference may still be viewed as a minor detail which does not undermine the correctness of his statement. However, a few explanatory words might be added to offer ampler insight into a topic that could be described as rather entangled, especially from a Western stance, particularly now that China is readjusting its values while attempting to reconcile thousands-year old concepts with Western ideals.

Despite the subtle changes and contributions that Chinese artists introduced (and are still introducing) in Chinese painting over the last centuries, one point cannot be denied: the key concepts lying at the foundation of Chinese painting remain unchanged. Hence, the repetitions seen by François Jullien are in a way inevitable. This is illustrated, among others, by the endless reiterations that may be found in numerous treatises whose authors simply quote or paraphrase ancient texts so as to assert their adhesion to the tradition and demonstrate that they, too, understand and follow the ancients *(shifa guren* 师法古人). But accomplished Chinese painters do not restate concepts established by the ancient masters out of mere pedantry. They do so because before making a contribution of their own, they deem it necessary to first absorb the ever-growing heritage that has been passed down to them since Antiquity.

Given that according to Chinese philosophy, everything finds its source in the Absolute One (yi 一), theoretically, practitioners of Chinese painting must be conscious that painting, far from being an end to itself, belongs to a system of thought that encompasses all aspects of human life and that, more than an art form, is what François Cheng describes as an "art of life".[7]

The same ideals apply to Jing Hao's bifa concept, which he did not create, so to speak, out of the blue. His whole treatise may be described as the result of a life-long process of self-cultivation and gradual absorption of philosophical and

1 James Legge (tr.), The Texts of Taoism (Part I), Dover Publications, New York, p. 85.
2 《老子・第四十二章》
3 Cited by Pierre Ryckmans in : Pierre Ryckmans, Les propos sur la peinture de Shi Tao - Traduction et commentaire, Arts asiatiques, Tome 14, 1966, p. 85. (Personal translation from the original French text.)
4 Ibid.
5 François Jullien (translated by J.M. Todd), The Great Image Has Not Form, On the Nonobject through Painting, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, p. 116
6 François Jullien, p. 117
7 François Cheng, Souffle-Esprit, Éditions du Seuil, 2006, p. 161.

artistic concepts. Kiyohiko Munakata saw in Jing Hao's Bifaji an attempt to propose a balanced synthesis of Taoist and Confucian principles[8]. It is relevant to note that this very attempt, as well as some of the concepts it discusses, all reveal a clear analogy between the Bifaji and Liu Xie's 刘勰 *Wenxin Diaolong* 《文心雕龍》 (*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*). In his work, Liu Xie drew upon the same philosophic fundamentals as did Jing Hao, a fact which further illustrates the universal character of Chinese arts and of the bifa concept.

Since its inception, Jing Hao's bifa concept has been handed down from one generation of painters to the next, each painter first receiving it and then enriching it through his own artistic philosophy and creation. Hence, Jing Hao's bifa may also be found in Shitao's 石涛 treatise on painting *Kugua Heshang Huayu Lu* 《苦瓜和尚畫語錄》, reasserted, and further developed and expanded through Shitao's own concept of the Unique Brushstroke (*yihua* 一畫). In modern times, Jing Hao's bifa concept lives on in the art view of Huang Binhong, among others, who greatly emphasised the importance of carrying out artistic innovation through tradition.

Here, I consider it worthwhile to expand a little on Huang Binhong's artistic views, especially since Huang Binhong may be regarded as the most prolific and influential Chinese painting theorist of 20th century China. Although widespread recognition of his oeuvre and writings came rather late, in the early 1980s, Huang Binhong is hailed, along with Wu Changshuo 吴昌硕 (1844-1927), Qi Baishi 齐白石, and Pan Tianshou 潘天寿 (1897-1971), as one of the most accomplished Chinese masters of the 20th century.

8 Munakata, pp. 3-4.

One does not need to go beyond the opening lines of The Essence of Painting (*Huafa Yaozhi* 画法要旨)[9] to find, neatly expressed, Huang Binhong's personal view of the bifa concept and its role in Chinese painting.

The art of the brush (*bifa* 筆法), ink (*mofa* 墨法), and composition (*zhangfa* 章法) are the three main points [to be observed in painting]. No one can possibly expect to disregard brush-and-ink (*bimo* 筆墨), relying solely and blindly on composition, yet improve and establish oneself, and set a long-lasting example for posterity.
筆法、墨法、章法，三者爲要，未有無筆無墨，徒襲章法，而能克自樹立，垂諸久遠者也。[10]

Huang Binhong's statement clearly follows that of Jing Hao: the brush (*bi* 笔) cannot be treated as a mere tool, or a set of technical rules. In his essay, he did however greatly develop the 10th century master's views. Faithful to the Chinese concept of inheritance and perpetuation, Huang Binhong took care to first absorb the contributions made by older masters, such as Shitao and Dong Qichang 董其昌, to Jing Hao's bifa concept, thus causing his own bifa concept to be the result of the accumulation and reinterpretation of earlier concepts.

It would not be enough to say that Huang Binhong treated the *bimo* 笔墨 concept[11]

9 The Essence of Painting 画法要旨 was first published in 1934, in the monthly magazine Guohua Yuekan 国画月刊, and is one of Huang Binhong's most important essays on the art of Chinese painting. In it, he laid down what he deemed as the essence, or the vital points of Chinese painting, and developed his own particular concept of bimo □□, that is, of the art of handling brush and ink, commonly referred to as wubi qimo 五笔七墨.
10 《黄宾虹文集・书画编・上册》，上海书画出版社，1999年，p. 489.
11 In The Essence of Painting, Huang Binhong pointed out that ancient masters always treated brush and ink separately, failing to unite them. Huang Binhong insisted on bringing them together, arguing that the two are complementary, since none can work without the other. In doing so, he did however raise the brush above the ink (see passage quoted above).

Huang Binhong 黄宾虹 (1865-1955)
Mountain and Stream 《山水小品冷溪之口》 67x33

as the heart and soul of Chinese painting. In his oeuvre, brush-and-ink (*bimo* 笔墨) becomes the painter's language, the vessel of his emotions, imbued with the painting's spirit. If the brush is flawed (i.e., handled improperly), the whole painting is lost. In the opening remarks of his essay, composition comes as a mere third (after brush and ink) and is one aspect painters should not trouble themselves with until they have not fully mastered the art of brush-and-ink.[12] Students should first devote their attention to the careful copy of ancient masterpieces, perfecting their brush-and-ink and ipso facto assimilating the compositional traits of the original works.[13] Incidentally, it becomes obvious that here, ancient masterpieces are not treated as a mere source of technical training, but as actual spiritual nourishment.

Jason C. Kuo has argued that in so doing, Huang Binhong actually liberated brush-and-ink from its conventional subject matter[14], thus allowing later generations of painters to engage themselves with the world of abstract forms. In theory, anything — i.e., not just moun-

12 《黄宾虹文集・书画编・上册》，上海书画出版社，1999年，p. 490.
13 Ibid.
14 Jason C. Kuo, Chinese Ink Painting Now, Timezone 8, Hong Kong 2010.

tains and waters, or animals and plants — may be depicted as long as brush and ink are handled properly. Huang Binhong himself illustrated this point, as he virtually kept on painting the same mountain scapes decade after decade, with little variation in terms of composition. In this, he partly redefined what had been asserted by Shitao in his famous treatise. The latter laid great emphasis on the individualistic quality of the painterly act, as may be seen in the seventh chapter of his *Kugua Heshang Huayu Lu* 《苦瓜和尚畫語錄》 :

At this point, even though the brush, the ink, the painting, everything would abolish itself, the Self would still subsist, existing by itself.[15]
縱使筆不筆，墨不墨，畫不畫，自有我在。[16]

Within Huang Binhong's art view, Shitao's idea doesn't work anymore, since the painter's ego now finds itself embedded in the brush-and-ink concept.
Through this brief outlining of the evolution and transformation of the bifa concept at the hand of various painters in different eras, one may see how Chinese painting and bifa have kept on developing unto our day, untouched by any revolution or schism. This is also how one should understand François Jullien's above-mentioned assertion: no new development, change or contribution introduced by contemporary painters should in any way unsettle the already established system of Chinese painting which, like a delicate clockwork, has been (and still is) carefully and constantly perfected and maintained throughout the centuries.

This particular attitude towards art hails from a broader outlook on life and the universe in general, built on harmony and balance, and the preservation thereof.

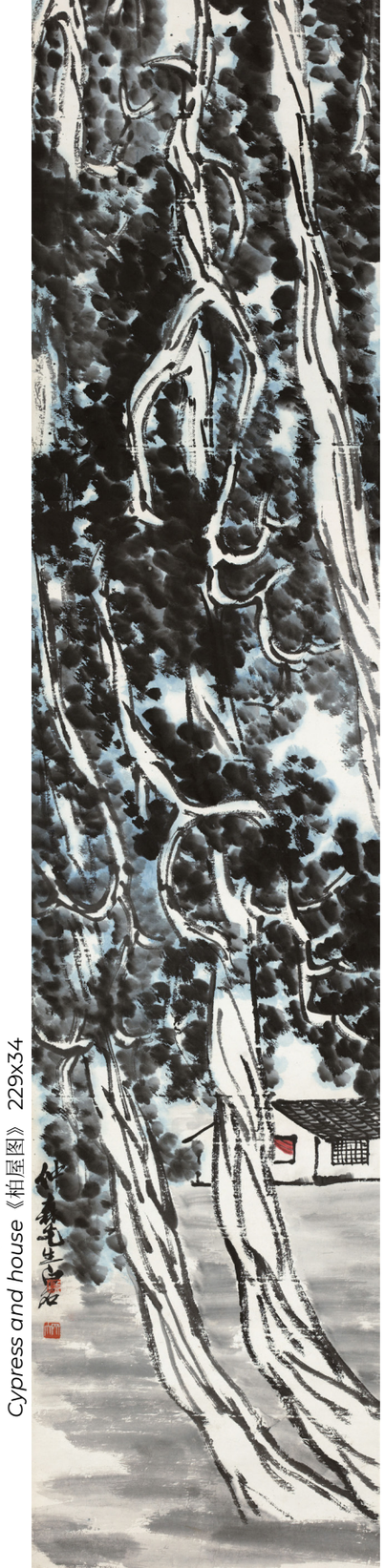
Man is tranquil when born, and this is his divine nature (*tianxing* 天性). As he is activated by sensation, his nature is injured. As he perceives matter (*wu* 物) and responds to it with the spirit (*shen* 神), knowledge is activated. When knowledge and matter meet in conjunction, the passions are awakened. When passions assume form (*xing* 形), man recognizes external stimuli. He will not be able to deny this in himself. Thus, divine principles (*tianli* 天理) perish. Those who arrive at the Tao do not permit themselves to deviate from the Divine. Though externally they transform as do natural phenomena (*wu* 物), internally they maintain clarity of mind (*qing* 情).[17]
人生而静，天之性也；感而后动，性之害也；物至而神应，知之动也；知与物接，而好憎生焉。好憎成形而智诱于外，不能反己，而天理灭矣。故达于道者，不以人易天；外与物化，而内不失其情。《淮南子 • 原道训》

In these concepts lies one major difference with Christian thought, which quite naturally influenced the development of Western thought and arts. Men are born into the world defiled by sin and there is nothing that they may do or say that will in any way alter their state. This is why Christian thought recognises that only Divine (i.e., external) intervention may bring about spiritual redemption (Solo Gratia). One short passage from the Holy Scriptures may well illustrate this point :
For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? (Luke 9:24, 25) [18]
Men should first and foremost care about spiritual salvation. Everything earthly should be of little concern, for life on this earth is but "a shadow of things to come" (Colossians 2:17). Blaise Pascal clearly expressed this idea in the Pensées :
The immortality of the soul is one thing which matters so much to us, and which touches us so profoundly, that one must needs have lost all sentiment in order to be indifferent about it.[19]

This is also why longevity and old age are not viewed as something "desirable" since these too are bodily attributes which do only concern this earthly life.[20]
Furthermore, one must keep in mind that Chinese painting and the Chinese system of thought have kept on developing since ancient times following one single and uninterrupted line, unperturbed by any revolution that might even come close in scope to what the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce described, in his assessment of the position of Christianity within Western culture, as the "greatest revolution ever accomplished by humanity, so great, so comprehensive and profound, so rich in consequences, so unexpected and irresistible in its taking place [...]."[21]

The forsaking, or rather, the voluntary casting away of an ideology or concept deemed redundant or even harmful lies at the heart of the Christian spirit. As one reflects on the Christian fundamentals, it may become easier to understand why history, although an important source of teachings and infor-



Qi Baishi 齐白石 (1864-1957)
Cypress and house 《柏屋图》 229x34

15 Pierre Ryckmans, Les propos sur la peinture de Shi Tao - Traduction et commentaire, Arts asiatiques, Tome 14, 1966, p. 107. (Personal translation from the original French text.)
Cf. Lin Yutang's translation of the same text : "Then, even if the brush and ink and the drawings are all wrong, the 'me', the 'self', remains there." (Lin Yutang, The Chinese Theory of Art, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, p. 146.)
16 石涛《苦瓜和尚画语录 • 絪缊章第七》
17 Susan Bush & Hsio-yen Shih, Early Chinese Texts on Painting, p. 3.
18 The Holy Bible (KJV), Trinitarian Bible Society, London.
19 Blaise Pascal, Pensées, Collection Maxi-Poche Classiques Français, Bookking International, Paris, 1995. (Personal translation of the original French text.)
20 For a study on this subject, see : Jerome Silbergeld, Chinese Concepts of Old Age and Their Role in Chinese Painting, Painting Theory, and Criticism, Art Journal, 1987, pp. 103-114 .
21 Benedetto Croce, Perché non possiamo non dirci «cristiani», published in Discorsi di varia filosofia, Vol. I, Laterza, Bari, 1945. (Personal translation of the original Italian text.)

mation, is not regarded as something whose continuity must be carefully preserved (as may be seen in the handing down of the Chinese painting tradition). Every man must individually learn to “know” God and “walk in His ways”. Despite the historical corpus of theological writings slowly accumulated through the centuries, beginning with the first written Law given to Moses and the teachings of Jesus Christ, all the way through Paul the Apostle, the Doctors of the Church, until the Protestant theologians and reformers, the concept of faith (that is, not the body of teachings normally referred to as the Christian Faith, but that very and unique strength to believe in God and follow in His ways) is something that is totally impossible to impart or inherit. In this sense, every generation, every individual must start anew. Seen from this angle, and transposed to painting, it becomes easier to understand the Western painter’s individualistic stance, as opposed to the collective viewpoint of the Chinese painter.

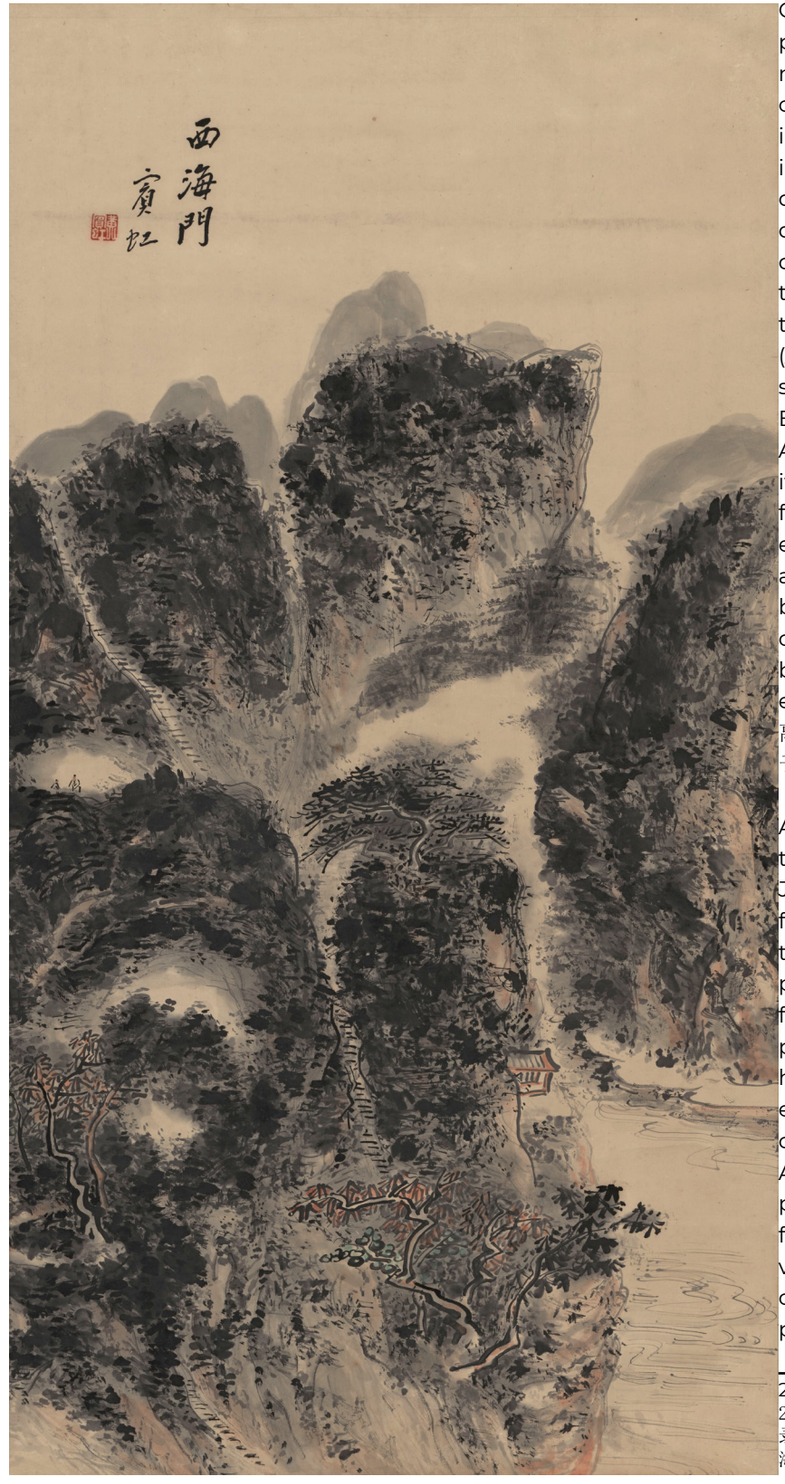
Perhaps more important still is the Christian worldview, which recognises the universe as the calculated and conscious creation of a Being superior to man, i.e., God, who is absolutely not a part of His Creation but exists outside time and space, having created them too. This implies that the universe as we know it may have an end, an idea which Chinese philosophers appear to have left untouched (since the Dao is treated as a “principle”, or “self-winding mechanism”, there is indeed no need to foresee such an issue). While Chinese painters concentrate their attention on the principles (*li* 理) that underlie creation, Christian thought focuses on understanding the Mind that shaped it. In the words of Paul Cézanne (in a discussion on painting with Émile Bernard) : “Je me tourne vers l’intelligence du Pater Omnipotens”.[22] Following such a line of thought, the idea of attuning oneself with the universe (which, as a part of creation, is inferior to the Creator) loses its meaning and the painting brush becomes nothing more than a tool with which the painter expresses his thought.

3. Conclusion : bifa’s transmission and self-regeneration

The technical mastery of the brush is but a part of Jing Hao’s much broader bifa concept. The handling of the brush itself does not rest on simple painterly needs, but on philosophical views.
One anecdote from the Lidai Minghua Ji may further illustrate the unique importance attributed to the brush by Chinese painters and critics :

There was a clever painter who said of himself that he could paint cloud vapors. I said to him : “The ancients never reached this final subtlety in their painting of clouds.If one moistens silk, dotting and filling in here and there with a light powder blown from the mouth, this is known as blown clouds. Such [a technique] is in accord with the principles of Heaven, but, though it may be called a subtle solution, one cannot see the brushstrokes in it, therefore it cannot be called painting.[23]
有好手画人，自言能画云气。余谓门：古人画云，未为臻妙。若能沾湿绡素，点缀轻粉，纵口吹之，谓之吹云。此得天理，虽曰妙解，不见笔踪，故不谓之画。

22 Cited by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his essay, Le doute de Cézanne, published in Sens et non-sens, Éditions Gallimard, 1996, pp. 13-33.
23 Susan Bush & Hsio-yen Shih, Early Chinese Texts on Painting, p. 63.

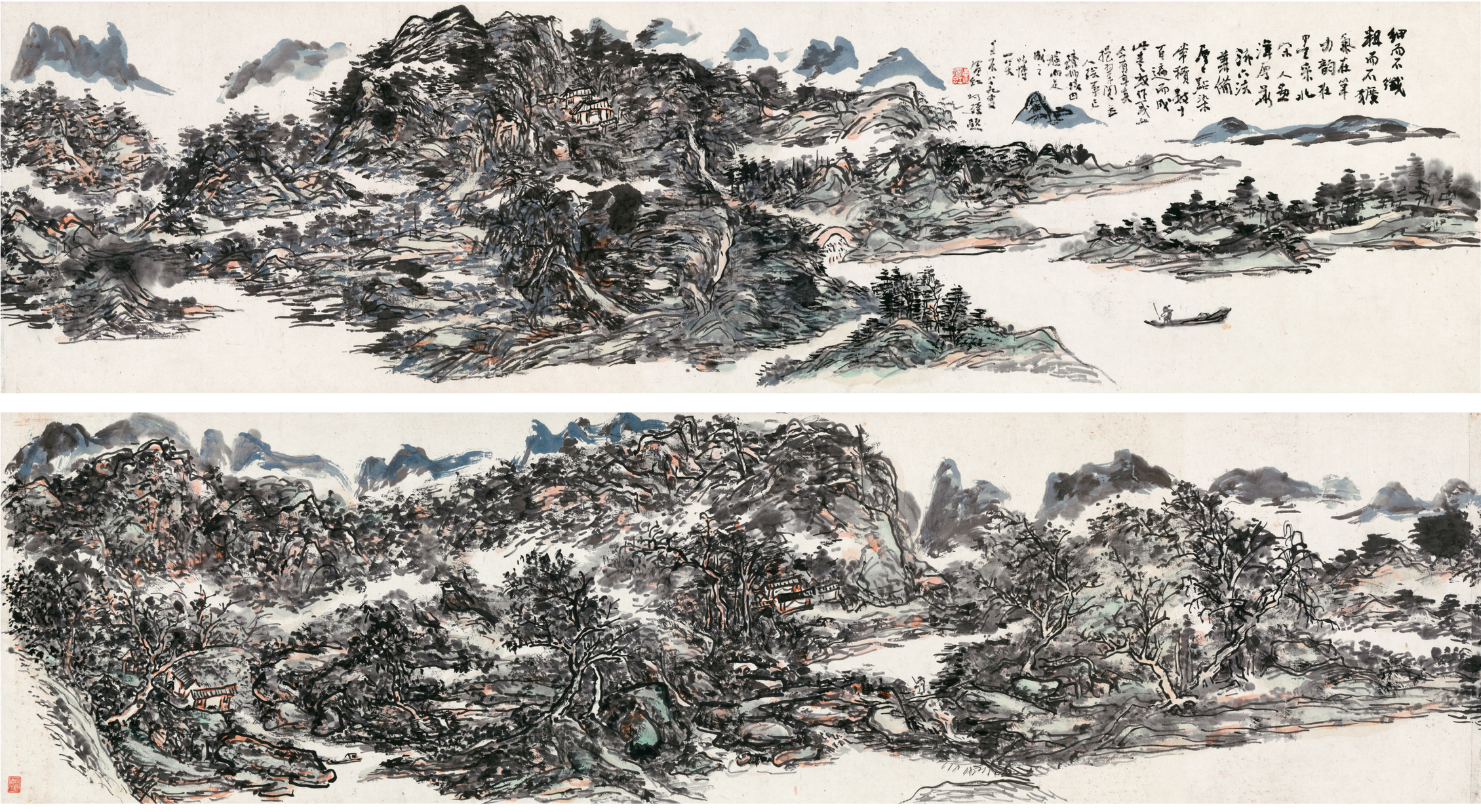


Huang Binhong 黄宾虹 (1865-1955)
Xii Haimen 《西海门图轴》88x64

Characterised by its dual philosophical-technical nature, the bifa concept can be regarded as an indispensable element in Chinese painting. This does also make it quite difficult to accurately define its essence, given that it belongs as much to the world of visible forms (*xing* 形) as to that of the spirit (*shen* 神). Huang Binhong once remarked : As one abandons the rule, it becomes impossible to fully unfold the brush’s exquisiteness (*miao* 妙) ; as one allows himself to be restrained by the rule, one cannot fully use the brush’s divine (shen 神) essence.[24]
离于法，无以尽用笔之妙；拘于法，不能全用笔之神。[25]

As it draws on fundamental philosophical concepts, Jing Hao’s bifa concept finds its source outside the world of Chinese painting. Handed down from one generation of painters to the next, bifa has come to us enriched, expanded, and yet unchanged in its essence. And just as Chinese painting, so will bifa be further enriched and developed by our generation of painters before being passed on to the next one.

24 Personal translation.
25 王伯敏　编，《黄宾虹画语录》，上海人民美术出版社，上海，1978，p. 30



Huang Binhong 黄宾虹 (1865-1955) *Imaginary travel among Mountains and Streams* 《山川卧游卷》
405x305 1952

An Haifeng 安海峰 *Qian*
Xuan paper and chinese ink, 95x95, 2015

One is all and all is one

By; An Haifeng 安海峰

As representatives of ancient Chinese philosophy, the two masterpieces Confucius 孔子 's *Analects* 《论语》 and Laozi 老子 's *Dao De Jing* 《道德经》 are, in my opinion, two vehicles proposing solutions to the problems faced by humanity since times immemorial. I do, however, prefer the former to the latter. While the former is much like a ladder, aiming to provide solutions to specific problems that we may encounter in our daily lives, and that can be conquered through learning, the latter may be compared to a switch, whose core value is to seek a form of controllable freedom. "Perception", the final solution suggested by the Dao De Jing, is not so specific and explicit in nature as the teachings proposed by the Analects. I kept a copy of the Dao De Jing with me during my stay in the US, a few years back, because to me, it is a revelation, a beacon in the dark.

Janet, my American landlord, is one person who left a deep impression on me, and with whom a had many deep and unexpected conversations. As I settled down in what was to be my new home for the following year, I soon found out that she was fond of tiny things, like feathers of little birds shed on the roadside, and nests blown down from trees by the wind. Even the wild flowers blossoming at a wall's corner could arouse great interest in her.

"Why do you always notice these tiny things?" I once asked.
"I do not expect to see bigger things." she replied.
"This is why you find true happiness, which is the biggest thing." I said.

Later, through our conversations, I gradually came to realise her strong love for Chinese culture. I found to be well read in such ancient classics as the *Analects*, the *Dao De Jing* and Sunzi's *Art of War* 《孙子兵法》. I was quite surprised to discover her love for Laozi, the philosopher of the Spring and Autumn Period and founder of Taoism, as well as for "blanks", or empty spaces intentionally left in Chinese paintings. When she told me that such empty spaces are not void at all, but that they are rather the expression of the painter's ideas, I gladly acknowledged her good taste for Chinese paintings. This is how we became friends. In return, she taught me about the Bible. Surprisingly, I could sense something very close to me in the excerpts she introduced me to. They reminded me of the teachings of some Chinese thinkers, such as Laozi and Wang Yangming 王阳明 (1472-1529). I find the similarity among them and humanity they try to convey. While Jesus teaches us to love one another ("love thy neighbour as thyself", Mark 12:31), emphasising and literally demonstrating that there is no greater love than to lay down one's own life for one's friends, Laozi advocated that the highest virtue is like water: "The highest excellence is like (that of) water. The excellence of water appears in its benefiting all things, and in its occupying, without striving (to the contrary), the low place which all men dislike."[1] 上善如水，水善利万物而不争. What a similarity! A common concept of love flourishes in their teachings, exhorting us to be kind to each other, to love one another. I'm fully convinced that love can bridge divides and make people live on friendly terms with each other. Likewise, Confucius remarked : "The wise delight in water; the humane delight in mountains." [2] 智者乐水，仁者乐山. Mountains and water are symbols of a wise man's spirit rather than a realistic landscape, and thus come close to Christ's words, "love thy neighbour as thyself."

In his *Preface to Mountain and Water Paintings* 《画山水序》, Zong Bing 宗炳 (375-443) asserted that "mountains and rivers have a material form, and yet intrigue the spirit"[3] 山水以形媚道. This clearly emphasised the purpose of Chinese mountain and water painting —intrigue the spirit. As for the Qing dynasty painter Shitao 石涛 (1642-1707), he put forward a revolutionary painting method: The One-Stroke Method 一画之法. "This is because when the primordial uncarved block was dispersed, the principle of oneness of strokes emerged, and ten thousand things were manifested. Confucius said: 'My doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity.' This proves that oneness is not merely idle talk."[4] 盖自太朴散，而一画之法立矣；一画之法立，而万物著矣。我故曰："吾道一以贯之。" My own studies have gradually brought me to believe that in

1 James Legge (tr.), The Texts of Taoism (Part I), New York: Dover Publications, 1962 p. 52.
2 Burton Watson (tr.), The Analects of Confucius, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p. 45.
3 Lin Yutang, The Chinese Theory of Art, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1967, p. 31.
4 Earle J. Coleman, Philosophy of Painting by Shih-T'ao — A Translation and Exposition of his Hua-P'u, The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978, p. 116.

the study of Chinese mountain and water painting, “one” point of view is more important than technique. “All-pervading unity” is the core of Chinese culture. According to Zhuangzi 庄子 (369 - 286), for instance, “Heaven and earth were born at the same time I was, and the ten thousand things are one with me.”[5] 天地与我并生，而万物与我为一（天人合一）. Laozi: “Having little, you may gain; having much, you may be at a loss. So the sage holds on to the One to be the model for the world.” [6]少则得，多则惑。是以圣人抱一为天下式. Wang Yangming: “knowledge and action are one”[7] 知行合一.

Some readers may be surprised to discover that quite similar views have been put forth in the West. The famous English poet William Blake (1757-1827) expressed himself in the following way: “To see a world in a grain of sand”; the German architect Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe (1886-1969) “less is more”; the contemporary British folk poet Allan Taylor likewise composed a song is, All is one. Therefore, “one” is the wise way that can help us to clearly see the world through and despite its complexity.

“One is all and all is one” means to observe the big through the small, and the small through the big. In my eyes, this is the key to the study of Chinese mountain and water painting, *shanshui hua* 山水画. This key does however compose itself of two points.
First of all, the Confucian classics are the most influential, beginning with The Great Learning 大学

In ancient times, one who intended to carry forward all the inherent virtues in the world and to rid people of material desires had to first rule his state well. To rule his state well, he had to first educate his family. To educate his family, he had first to cultivate himself. To cultivate himself, he had first to set his heart right. To set his heart right, he had first to be sincere and honest. [8]
古之欲明明德于天下者，先治其国。欲治其国者，先齐其家。欲齐其家者，先修其身。欲修其身者，先正其心。欲正其心者，先诚其意。

From cultivating oneself to “carrying forward all the inherent virtues in the world and to rid people of material desires” — this is to complete the thinking transformation from the individual to the world. This transformation is abstract and difficult, but was regarded as a popular rule in ancient China.

The second, i.e., the “unity of man and heaven” 天人合一, is a concept so important that main schools of thought in China have been discussing it ever since its inception . As Zhuangzi put forward: “Heaven and earth were born at the same time I was, and the ten thousand things are one with me.”, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104) added in a similar vein, “Transform Heaven and Man into one” 天人之际，合而为一. It is ideas such as these, influenced by Taoism and Buddhism, that prompted some to flee the vain pleasures of this worldly life and make their abode in the mountains.

This is why Chinese painters, regardless of whether they spent their lives in seclusion or in office, all pursue the same purpose — to cultivate oneself and to rule one’s state well. Real mountains and streams are just symbolic goals of self-cultivation. Likewise, Chinese painting should be perceived as a way of self-cultivation, the ultimate pursuit of its practitioner. The same aspect may be found in the tea ceremony, where the ceremony is more important than tea itself. This could be the main reason explaining why Chinese painting styles didn't have radical changes over the past millennia.
The concept “one is all and all is one“ also becomes apparent when one studies the materials, tools and forms of expression proper to Chinese painting.
First, the main characteristic of Chinese paper is to highlight the properties of ink-stroke rhythm, as well as the impossibility to correct any eventual mistakes on the painter’s part. The properties of Chinese Xuan paper, *xuanzhi* 宣纸, are as wonderful as life itself, but cannot be reproduced.

Second, Chinese ink is as mysterious and changeful as the night. Ink on white Chinese paper is as abundant as night meets day, and is therefore the most direct and natural colour, capable of summarising in an infinity of shades ranging from white to black, all the subtle transmutations of our complex world.

Third, there are two peculiarities about Chinese writing brushes, *maobi* 毛笔.
On one hand, as Laozi put it, “the softest thing in the world can penetrate the hardest” 天下之至柔，驰骋天下之至坚. This does equally apply to the Chinese brush, whose soft hairs can trace the hardest lines. On the other hand, the brush may be likened to a piano’s keyboard, which has 88 keys and is therefore limited, while the music proceeding from it is infinite. The Chinese brush, too, is a simple tool, yet its possibilities are endless.
Fourth, poetry, calligraphy, painting and seal carving are the basic forms of Chinese painting, while *guqin* 古琴, go *weiqi* 围棋, calligraphy and painting are the basic disciplines to be mastered in a traditional Chinese literati’s *wenren* 文人 education. Thus, it may be seen that traditional Chinese culture emphasises the multi-faceted thinking dimension and the diversity of one’s skills, which could remind one of Leonardo da Vinci’s versatility.

Finally, how to express the core of Chinese mountain and water painting in Western thinking? I think Allan Taylor’s “all is one and one is all” provides a suitable answer. One of William Blake’s poems does also come close to the artistic spirit of Chinese mountain and water painting:

Auguries of Innocence
To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.[9]

Prof. An Haifeng 安海峰 was born in Binzhou city, Shanxi Province, China. Enrolled by affiliated middle school of Xi’an Academy of Fine Arts in1997. Enrolled by School of Print of Xi’an Academy of Fine Arts in 2002. Sought for his post degree in School of Sketch of Guangxi Arts Institute in 2006. Professor at School of Fine Arts of Guangxi Arts Institute as the director in the third studio since 2009, currently is a doctoral candidate at the Xi’an Academy of Fine Arts 西安美术学院. His specialty is Chinese mountain and water painting.

5 Burton Watson (tr.), The Complete Works of Zhuangzi, New York: Columbia University Press, 2013, p. 13.
6 Xu Yuanchong (tr.), Laws Divine and Human, Wuzhou: Chuanbo Press, 2011, www.cicc.org.cn.
7 Qian Mu, Wang Shouren, Shangwu Yinshu Guan Press,1939, p.44.
8 Zeng Zi, Da Xue .Zhong Yong, The Joint Publishing Company Of Beijing, 2010, p.3.
Qian Mu, Wang Shouren, Shangwu Yinshu Guan Press,1939, p.81.
9 William Blake, The complete poetry of William Blake, A digireads.com Book, Print ISBN 10:1-4209-3782-0

An Haifeng 安海峰 *Ze*
Xuan paper and chinese ink, 80x180, 2018

On the Innovation and Transcendence of Contemporary Shan Shui Painting from the Compromise Spirit 折衷精神 of Lingnan School of Painting 岭南画派

By; CHEN Ye (Ph.D. candidate at Graduate School of Chinese National Academy of Arts; assistant research fellow at Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts)

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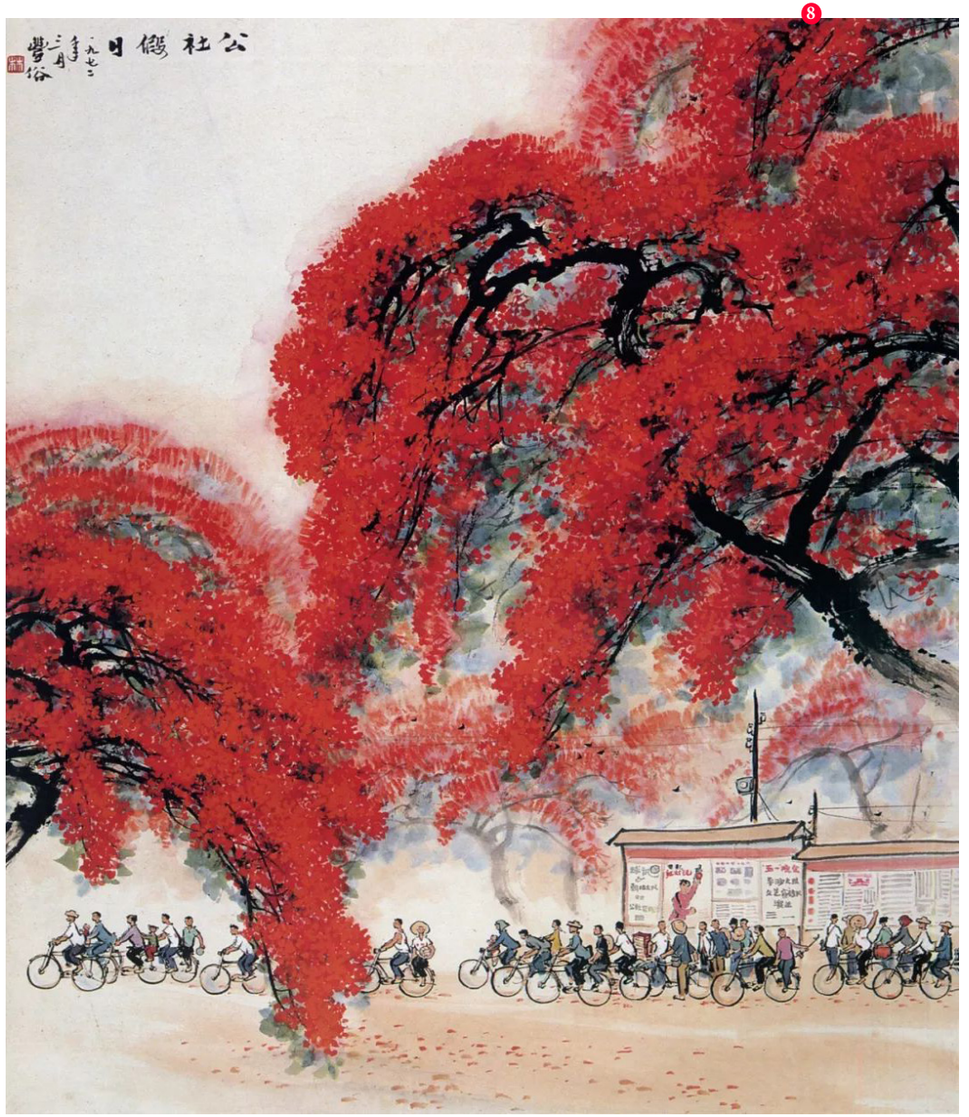


Modern Chinese Painting Revolution

This is a movement that Chinese painting related to the word "change" in the twentieth century. The modern transformation of Chinese society has brought about the predicament of the traditional Chinese painting which has been handed down for thousands of years under the vision of modern society. Guangdong—"as the birthplace of China's democratic bourgeois revolution, Western factors are the catalysts in the process of Lingnan cultural transformation"[1]-In art, there is a force of change: Gao Jianfu高剑父(1879—1951), Chen Shuren 陈树人(1884—1948) and Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889—1933) took the lead in raising the banner of "political revolution" and "art revolution" in the modern Chinese painting world, has rapidly changed the pattern of Chinese culture and art, leading Chinese art into a new era of transformation from tradition to modernity.[2] This power has had a profound impact on Chinese painting, including Shan Shui painting 山水画, in the 20th century, and some scholars even consider it as a catalyst for the transformation of Chinese painting.[3] Lingnan School of Painting岭南画派 , led by the pioneers of Gao Jianfu, Chen Shuren (Fig.1) and Gao Qifeng, jointly explored and transformed the new face of Chinese painting along with art pioneers in other areas of China. The transformation of Shan Shui painting reached it's peak during this time as well.

The founders of the Lingnan School of Painting have a broad mind about art. They, especially Gao Jianfu, proposed the way to change the new Chinese painting, and "compromise" 折衷 is the core: as he said in his book *My View on Modern Chinese Painting*

1

1 Chen Jichun：Fusion of Chinese and Western New Art, Nanjing Normal University, 2002. 陈继春：《融合中西新艺术》，南京师范大学，2002年

2 This view comes from the exhibition "Dawn-The Transformation of Guangdong Chinese Painting in the Early 20th Century"（《曙色——二十世纪前期广东中国画变革之路》 , Lingnan School of Painting The memorial岭南画派纪念馆, March 2017.

3 This view is quoted from Li Jinkun's李劲堃 interview in the exhibition "Dawn of Light-The Road to Change in Guangdong Chinese Painting in the Early 20th Century""曙色——二十世纪前期广东中国画变革之路" .

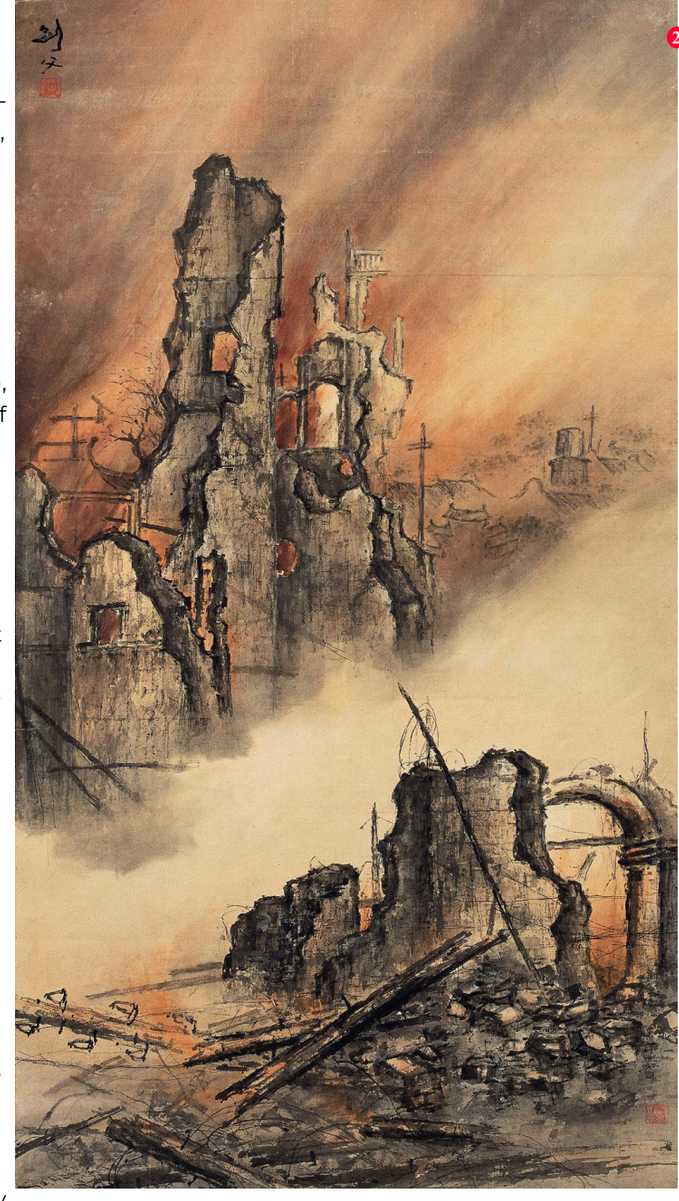
《我的现代国画观》: “For painting, it is necessary to compromise the strengths of the arts of the ancient and modern, arts of the Chinese and foreign, and reform it with innovation, so as to meet the needs of a realistic new Chinese painting, epitomize the essence of the world from ancient to modern."[4] Gao Qifeng and Chen Shuren also agreed with this.

Huang Zhijian 黄志坚[5] summarized the characteristics of the Lingnan School of Painting as follows: 1. Advocating "art revolution" and establishing "modern Chinese painting" as its purpose; 2. Compromise the arts of Chinese and the West, integrating the essence of ancient and modern arts; 3. Taking both form and spirit as the ideal, both elegance and popular appreciation ; 4. fusing of fine brushwork 工笔 and freehand style写意，and equal emphasis on color and ink. In my opinion, the third and fourth points of the characteristics are generalizations with the context of the current era. The former includes the changes in artistic aesthetics during the transformation of the modern society, and the latter summarizes the creative tendency of works at that time - interest in color, while Lingnan School of Painting has experienced changes in social forms and development of aesthetic standards, and has gradually acquired a richer and multi-layered appearance. The purpose of the "art revolution" is "modern Chinese painting". After the "modern Chinese painting" was gradually established, the original intention was expanded to the exploration of innovation, which still brought progress to the development of Chinese painting. Among the characteristics of the Lingnan School of Painting, what has always been implemented to this day should be the concept of "Compromise Spirit" (2nd characteristic above), and this is also the essence of the spirit of the Lingnan School of Painting.

“Compromise spirit” was able to condense into an emerging force at that time, enabling fellow and followers to discuss innovative art and truly reflect the spirit of the times. It can be seen that the pioneers of Lingnan School of Painting had advanced artistic views. The core of the "Compromise Spirit" is analyzed following in two aspects (from content and form)

New Content - The Spirit of the Times

“The emergence of a new force in the painting world is beyond reproach. Is it true that our national skills will not change for thousands of years?” Gao Jianfu pointed out the importance of the time quality of art. He opposed being complacent. He encouraged painting from life and expressing the reality of modern themes and urban life, especially emphasizing "painting motivation": "in the turbulent era of the 20th century, if your works can't have relations with the country, society and the people, they will be eliminated by the times. "; "Painting is to represent the times and progress with the times. "Gao Jianfu led to paint the things of reality, the new era, such as bridges, cars, dilapidated buildings, even airplanes and artillery, he brought many new things from society to light in Shan Shui painting. Guan Shanyue关山月 (1912-2000), Li Xiongcai 黎雄才(1919-2001) and Lin Fengsu 林丰俗 (1939-)have been exploring how Shan Shui painting can express the country’s new life and show the spirit of the times. The contents of these new things were not found in the creation of traditional Chinese painting. Therefore, when Gao Jianfu's *The Flames of the Eastern Battlefield*《东战场的烈焰》(Fig.2, 1932) appeared, it could be imagined how strong of a shock was generated. In the painting, the remnant walls and chaotic scenes of the library after Japanese bombing showed not only the situation of society at that time, but also a deeper level of emotion and national spirit during that time. "we should take representation of the national spirit as the order and make the new Chinese painting a national art." "It seems that the style of new art must be reported most faithfully in accordance with the inherent spirit of the east, indicating the most reasonable spirit of mutual love and mutual assistance among human beings, and to the extreme peak of the beauty of human life." This is the spiritual core pursued by Lingnan School of painting in the content of creation. Under the guidance of this spirit, the followers of Lingnan School have produced many excellent works, which have achieved many masterpieces in the history of Chinese Art: Guan Shanyue’s *Newly Highway*《新开发的公路》 (Fig. 3, 1954) ,Li Xiongcai’s *Flood Prevention in Wuhan*《武汉防汛图》(Fig. 4, 1956) showing the spiritual outlook of the characters in the new era.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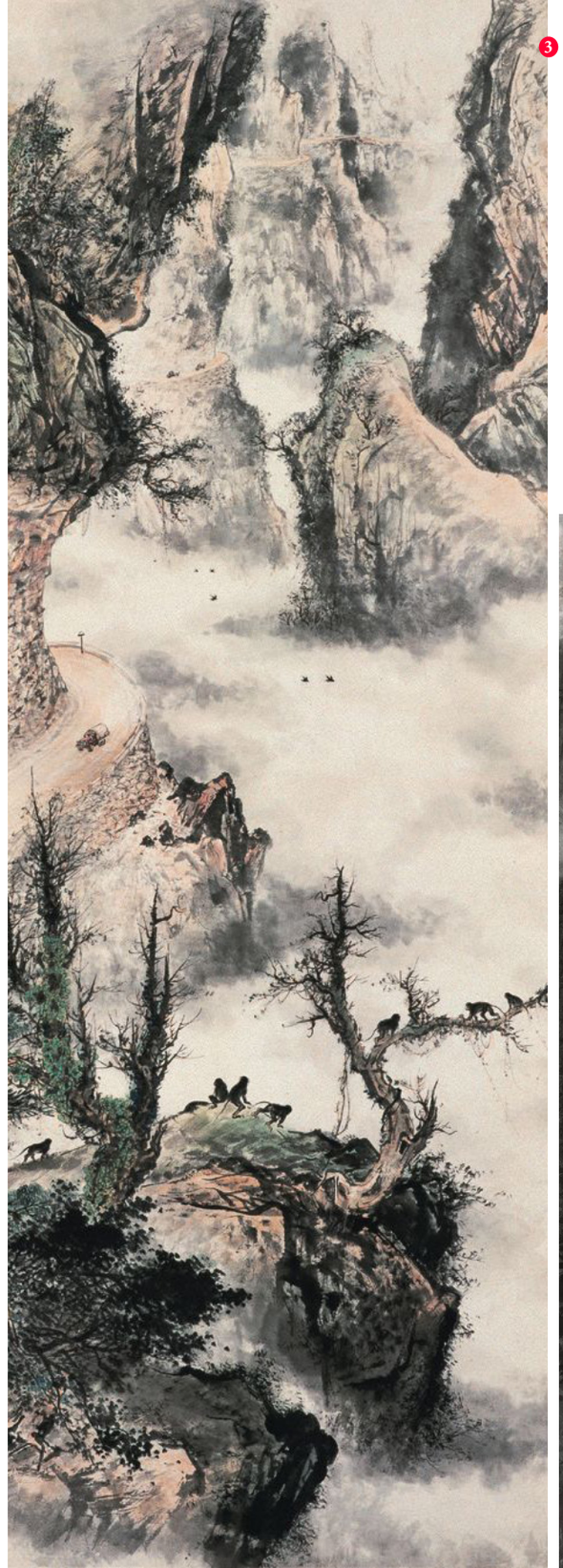
New Method - Compromise from Tradition and West

The "combination of Chinese and Western painting" is Gao Jianfu's method to explore the new Chinese painting. However, it needs to be treated dialectically. He does not agree with the total westernization, and he also opposes "giving up all the western painting and holding the "old brand"(ancient traditional painting)”. Therefore, compromise is the key point. What is the compromise? How does one compromise? This is what artists need to think about. And Gao Jianfu gave

4 Gao Jianfu's Poems and Essays,（《高剑父诗文初编》） Compiled by Li Weiming（李伟铭）, Guangdong Higher Education Press, 1999, P262-263. Note: All the citations below are from this book if they do not mark quotations.
5 Huang Zhijian (1919-1994), born in Guangzhou, Guangdong. In 1940, he graduated from the Hong Kong Academy of Fine Arts and the Faculty of Arts of Lingnan University. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, he engaged in art history research and flower-and-bird painting creation, good at Chinese painting and art theory. Served as vice president and art consultant of Guangzhou Academy of Painting. His works include *Characteristics of Lingnan School* 《岭南派的特征》

the answers below: 1. Broad vision; 2. Comprehensive performance. He often emphasizes in his manuscripts that the vision should not be limited to western Europe, but should be extended to all kinds of Arts in the world, such as India, Egypt, Persia. "If they have any advantages, you should absorb and adopt, turn it into the nutrition of Chinese painting." In his "fifteen-year-plan" (including the "ten-year-plan"), he also fully reflected his broad vision of various arts. This kind of broad vision can make the expressions of "compromise spirit" have a solid foundation. As Gao Jianfu wrote, "Learning from ancient and foreign countries in art is an important principle for reforming Chinese painting". For the performance of the new Chinese painting, Gao Jianfu explored the expression of "compromise" from the aspects of theme, atmosphere, tone, material, composition and subjects. From the works of the pioneers of Lingnan school of painting, it is not difficult to feel their new representation, unique composition, emotional atmosphere and so on. Their exploration has influenced later followers. For example, Guan Shanyue and Li Xiongcai created new composition models, and Yang Zhiguang 杨之光(1930-) combined the techniques of watercolor and oil painting with traditional Chinese painting.

However, “The new Chinese painting (new Shan Shui painting) does not need formalism at all". What the Lingnan School of Painting advocates is not simple techniques or styles that followers have been embracing and creating rich artistic features with, but their original intention of innovation and the concept of compromise. " With the spirit of traditional Chinese painting and the scientific techniques of Western painting, this school of painting can win a lot of sympathy in the art world." Compromise



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spirit really opened a new chapter in the exploration of new Chinese painting.

Inheritance and development

Gao Jianfu was far-sighted. He had high hopes for Lingnan School of Painting, and this high hope is with a development perspective, he said: "In the 20th century, science has progressed, transportation has developed, and the cultural scope has expanded from the country to the world. Painting also expanded to the world. I hope that this new Chinese painting will become the painting of the world.” Their followers did not fail to live up to this expectations, they passed it on with practical actions. In this process of inheritance, the spirit of Lingnan School of Painting has also developed. How to combine the spirit of the times and expressive techniques, to explore them dialectically is a difficult problem faced by the followers, and it is also the current and future goal of Lingnan School of Painting. How should they practice the problem of the "Compromise Spirit"?

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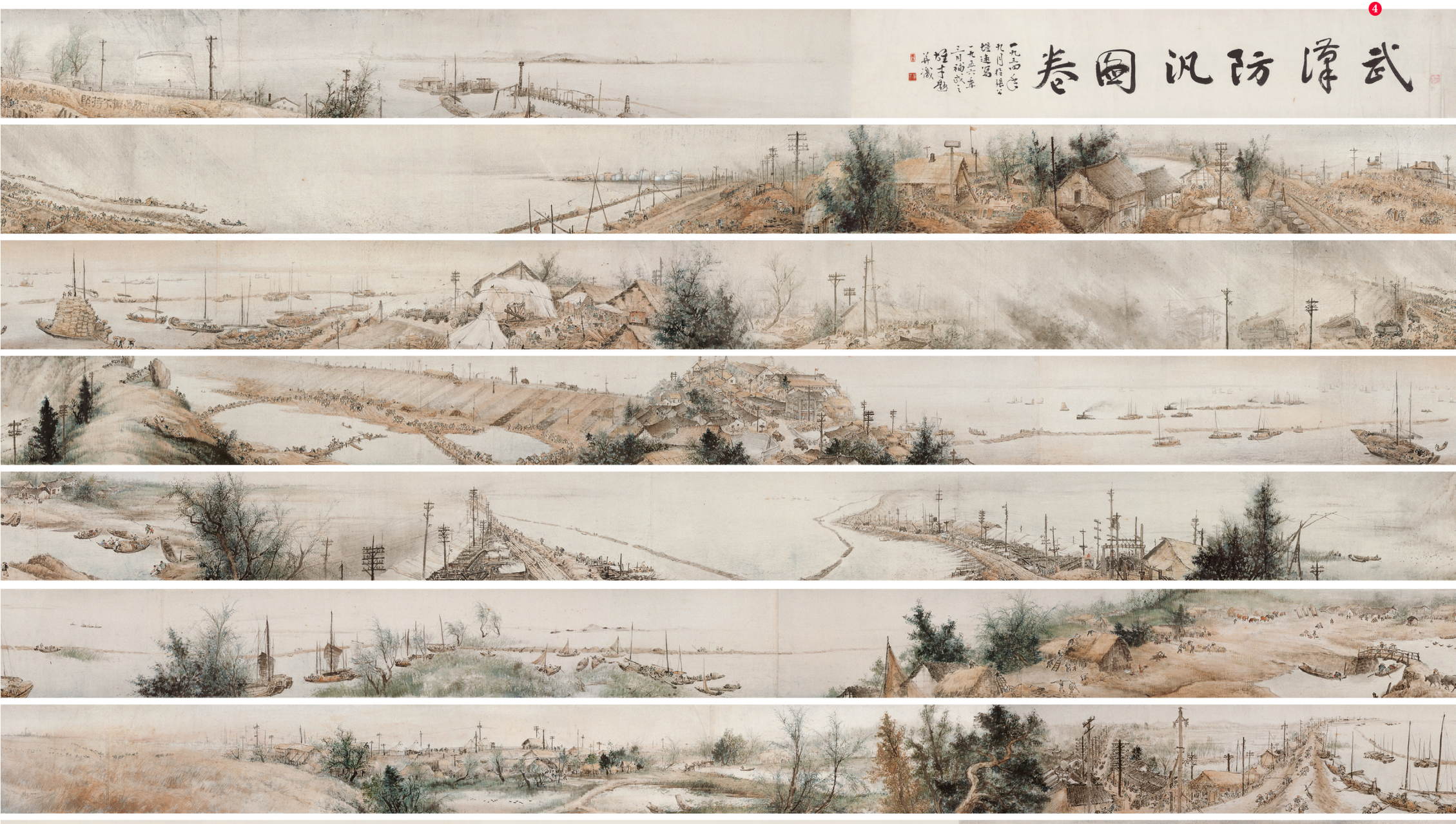
Before discussing this issue, let’s take a look at the contemporary inheritance of Lingnan School of Painting. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, some followers of Lingnan School of Painting continued to create their art in various regions overseas, and insisted on passing on its spirit. Many teachers and educators have made followers spread all over the world. In the meanwhile, Lingnan School of Painting in Guangdong Province was exploring new Chinese paintings, it also set up apprentices. Among them, Fang Rending方人定 (1901-1975), Guan Shanyue, Li Xiongcai and other generations of artists inherited the spirit of Lingnan School of Painting. Many of them developed not only in Guangdong, but also all over the country. A big branch inheritd by artists such as Guan Shanyue and Li Xiongcai was closely combined with Guangdong art education through Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts 广州美术学院(formerly known as mid-south academy of Fine Arts中南美术专科学校). The spirit of Lingnan School of painting has been continuously carried forward with great achievements. Nowadays, a number of outstanding Guangdong artists active in the Chinese art scene are from this academy: Chen Jinzhang陈金章(1929-, Fig.5), Liang Shixiong 梁世雄(1933-), Fang Chuxiong方楚雄 (1950-),

武漢防汛圖卷



一九五六年九月杜建時
一九五六年二月袖成
程千帆
蔣巍

Chen Yongqiang陈永锵, Zhang Zhian张治安, Liu Shumin 刘书民(1942-), Chen Xinhua陈新华, Su Baijun苏百钧(1951-), Li Jinkun李劲堃(1958-), Zhu Yongcheng朱永成(Fig.6), Fang Chuqiao方楚乔(1953-, Fig.7)etc. Their creations have different styles, diversity and is unique. It is precisely these artists who demonstrate the spirit of Lingnan school of painting with practice.

Here are some examples: Chen Jinzhang, Liang Shixiong, and Lin Fengsu paid attention to paint from life and depict the rivers and mountains of the motherland, created a series of masterpieces showing the new style of the times -- *Harbor* Morning《海港早晨》, *The Early Snow in Zaoyuan*《枣园初雪》, *Common Holidays* 《公社假日》(Fig.8, 1972) etc.; they used new visual languages to express their understanding of the simplicity of life, and expressive angles full of life. They established a new form of Chinese painting. On the way of innovation of traditional Chinese painting, these artists show a strong flavor of life, which is based on the internal transformation of local culture. Each of them has a new expression of "compromise" giving the "compromise spirit" a deeper connotation.

The overall aesthetic characteristics of the Lingnan School of Painting is precisely the word "change". Under the guidance of the "compromise spirit", the artist insists on inclusiveness and innovative practice. They practice by themselves and use their creation to show the spirit of the new era. Artists who have inherited the spirit of the Lingnan School of Painting, teach and educate people, and pass it on. Huang Zhijian believes that the Lingnan School of Painting is a kind of "ism", not a model[6]; Wei Chenghong 韦承红 also said in her book that Lingnan School of Painting is "more like a trend of thought, a kind of -ism"[7]. From the above, it can be seen that what Lingnan School of Painting inherits is a spirit, and this spirit is still meaningful today.

6 Huang Zhijian: *On the Characteristics of the "Lingnan School of Painting", Research on the Lingnan School of Painting,* Volume 1, Edited by the Lingnan School of Painting Research Office, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, Lingnan Art Publishing House, 1987.（黄志坚：《论“岭南画派”的特征》，《岭南画派研究》第一辑，广州美术学院岭南画派研究室编，岭南美术出版社，1987年）

7 Wei Chenghong:*Lingnan Painting School,* Liaoning Fine Arts Publishing House, 2003, P21.（韦承红：《岭南画派》，辽宁美术出版社，2003年）

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What is the significance of the spirit of the Lingnan School of Painting in the present and future development of Chinese painting? We may be able to get a glimpse and get inspiration from a group of contemporary artists who have inherited the spirit of the Lingnan School of Painting and their creations:

1. Thinking of change:

Chen Zhenguo 陈振国 once mentioned his views on the compromise between Chinese and Western techniques in an interview: "I have always admired some scholars in the period of the Republic of China. They not only have a solid foundation in traditional culture, but also can look at the world to absorb the rich nutrition of Western culture. I think that traditional artistic techniques and modern modeling concepts can be well combined."[8] Chen Zhenguo's thinking about "compromise spirit" is deep-seated, thinking about the differences between Eastern and Western cultures. In addition to the differences in the expression methods, he hopes to observe the world with the idea of "equal to the same kind". This is precisely the reflection of the current era. The exchange between China and the West has begun to reverse the western-input and established a platform for dialogue in the context of the world. The artists of Chen Zhenguo's generation reflect the thinking in the context of this era. A group of his creations about Europe, Australia, Korea and other places also reflect this trend of thinking. The "ordinary heart" of Chinese and Western cultures can be said to be a contemporary development of the spirit of "compromising Chinese and Western". China and the West have begun an equal dialogue, and the development of Chinese painting should also be on this equal platform. And this is also the speculation of "change" and "compromise" in the context of the current era.

2. Foreign knowledge to serve China

Li Jinkun's 李劲堃 Shan Shui paintings show a unique artistic conception and have a modern visual aesthetic tension. Works such as T*he Twilight of the Desert*《大漠之暮》 (Fig.9, 1989) and *Frosty Dawns* 《霜天晓雾》(Fig.10) have changed the traditional perspective of Shan Shui

8 Chen Zhenguo:*External Picks-Collection of Chen Zhenguo's Works*, 2012.

paintings, bringing the expressive perspective and aesthetics of Western painting. He has been adhering to the artistic propositions and spiritual ideas of the Lingnan School of Painting, and this inheritance has developed and evolved in his understanding. From learning and absorbing Western art, to focusing on the improvement of expressive techniques, and then he realized that "to make foreign knowledge serve China, we must take root in tradition, and at the same time, we can get rid of the tradition"[9], this process of comprehension of the "Compromise Spirit" also reflects the understanding of different levels of Chinese culture, a reflection of cultural confidence and the spirit of the times. "Adhering to the Chinese culture, adhering to artistic ideals, strengthening cultural self-confidence, and persisting in innovation"[10] is the current development path of New China. The guidance of the spirit of the Lingnan School of Painting has opened up new horizons for the artistic development of Chinese cultural revival.

3. The expansion of Chinese culture:

There are many examples of the young generation of artists who innovate and develop from their own national culture. Such as Yu Li's 于理 (1972 -) creation focuses on the delicate emotions between Chinese characters of different ethnic groups in their own cultural context. Her works are exquisite and full of tension. She especially likes to decorate delicate and complicated accessories and clothes. In her special research on the techniques and colors, she radiates the feelings and beliefs in the spirit of the characters, in order to develop an aesthetic of Contemporary meticulous工笔 figure paint-

9 Wang Yunan,Mo Fei: Li Jinkun: A Lingnan Painter with Both Tradition and Contemporary Development, Collection Auction,2015, Issue 5.（王于楠、莫非：《李劲堃：一位传统与当代并进的岭南画家》，《收藏拍卖》2015年第五期）

10 Excerpts from an interview with Li Jinkun, reported by Nanfang Daily, September 26, 2019.（李劲堃采访摘录，《南方日报》2019年09月26日报道）

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ing. On the other hand, Chen Peng陈朋, who also got inspiration from the South-West ethnic minorities, expressed his artistic features in a different way. He explored freehand style写意with a high inspiration in his ink and brush creation.

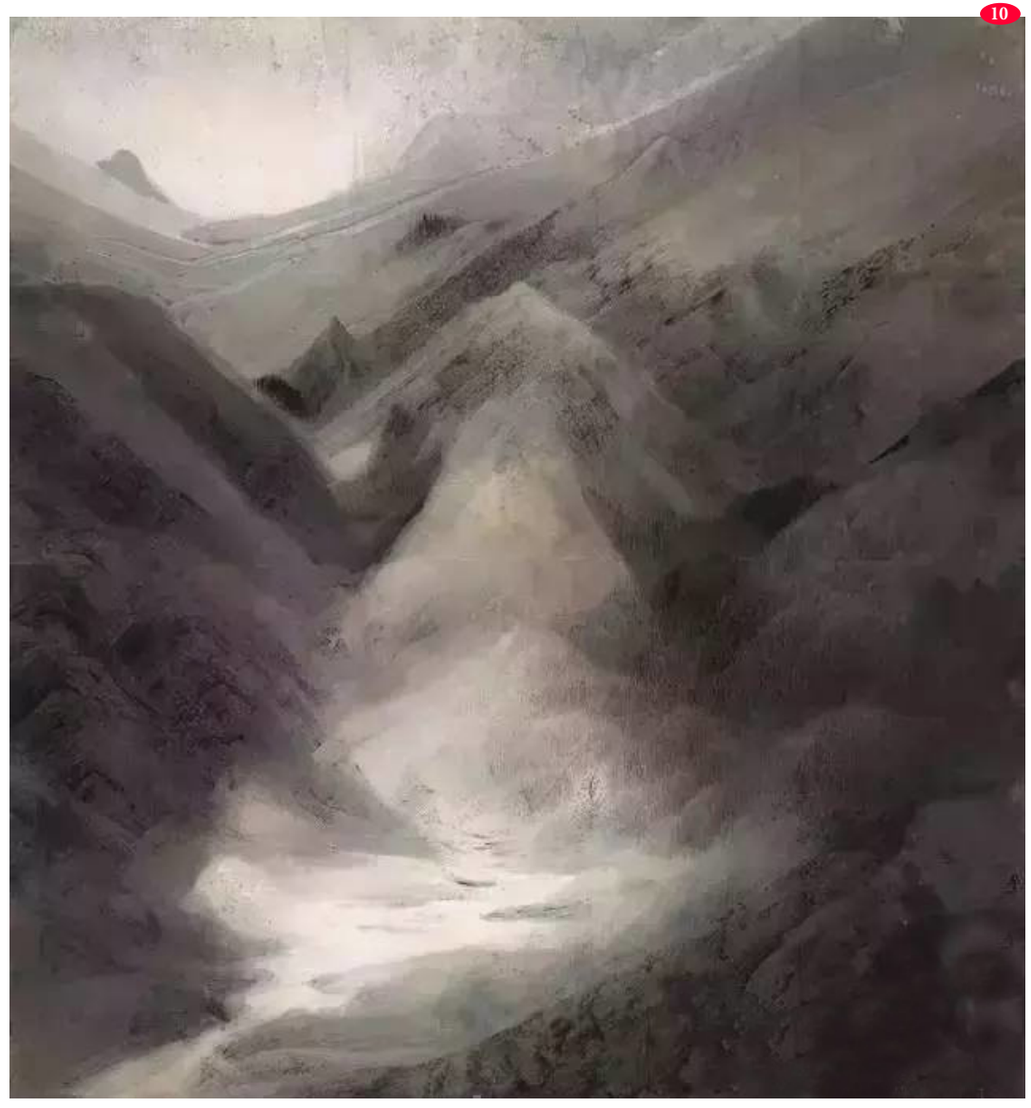
Li Jinkun believes that "change" is the eternal theme of art, and also the best inheritance of the innovative spirit of the predecessors of Lingnan School of Painting.[11] "Change" takes the spirit of compromise as the path, and the future of art development requires local culture as the emotional creative motivation to be valuable. The above-mentioned inheritors of the Lingnan school of Painting all reflect their concern and associate their own culture with their works. It is this emotional foundation that makes their works become classics. Under the guidance of the compromise spirit, how should the younger generation of artists explore creation that reflects the spirit of the times and based on local culture? Nowadays, some artists are trying to advance with practice. They have the courage to make breakthroughs and look for new artistic language: some artists seek "changes" in experimental ink painting and modeling, or express the modern emotions of urban living beings. The entangled identity consciousness and self-spirit mapping gives artistic creation a more universal value. Under the international vision of the global community, some artists have expanded the dimensions of creation, and their works have taken a new leap; some artists have broken the boundaries of painting, conveyed the value orientation of ideas from images, deepened the ideological value of creation, and presented the creation expressively with ideological depth.

Afterthought: Innovation and Transcendence

Gao Jianfu's "modern concept of painting" and the compromise spirit of Lingnan School of Painting were born in the early twentieth century when Chinese society was facing tremendous changes, but this does not mean that his artistic concept and guiding spirit belonged only to the last century. At that time, they were facing the modernization transformation of traditional art. They absorbed nutrients from foreign art theories and concepts, and carried out painting changes in the "form" and "idea" of painting. These concepts are dialectical. Even if the art of painting has developed far, and has completed the modernization transformation, it does not mean that the spirit of the Lingnan school of painting needs to exit the scene. On the contrary, the founder of Lingnan school of painting, headed by Gao Jianfu, has great artistic ideals and far-sighted artistic vision, which makes the compromise spirit have the characteristics of keeping pace with the times. This spirit can still reflect the guiding significance of innovation and development with the development of the times.

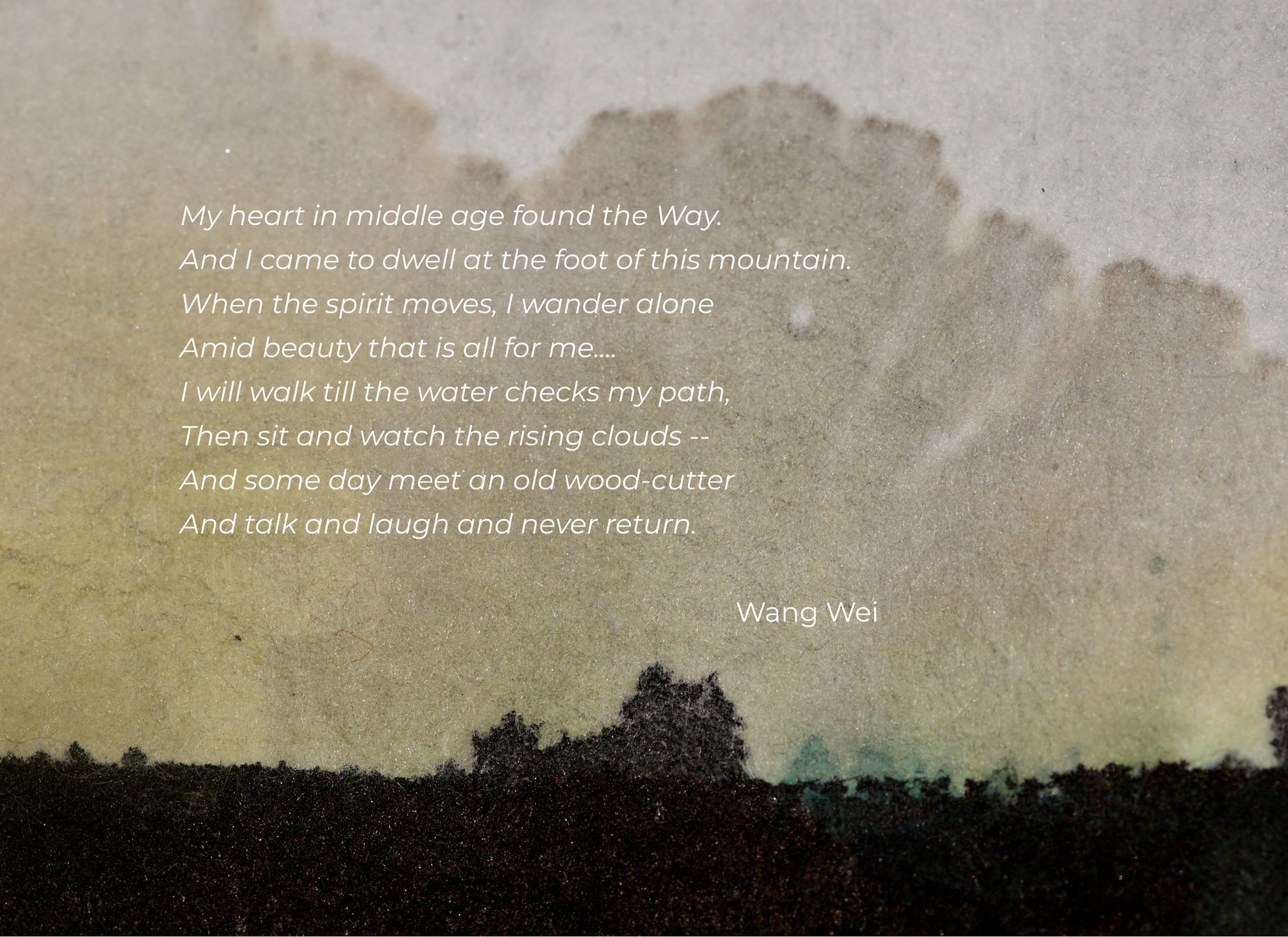
Contemporary artists have "compromise spirit" from the beginning of their concepts. Their compromise and fusion transcends regionalism and timeliness. Looking back on the spirit of Lingnan Painting School along the way, what must be affirmed is the influence and positive attitude of the spiritual guidance of it. "We feel that the wheels of the times are constantly being launched and rotated. Today, we have reformed and created. We will soon become obsolete. New methods and new theories will emerge. At that time, we will reform it again, recreate it again, we will always revolutionize and create

11 Excerpts from an interview with Li Jinkun, reported by Nanfang Daily, September 26, 2019.



forever, so that we can evolve forever."[12] This spirit of never slackening and always "innovating" is the driving force for the continuous advancement of artistic creation, and the inclusive and compromise approach has a broad perspective. Many studies define the Lingnan School of Painting as the aesthetic characteristics of the times and geographic area. This is biased. What they inherit is not a technique or style, nor a similar aesthetic or visual pursuit, but a creative spirit of innovation and change. The current value and significance of the spirit of Lingnan School of Painting is a spirit that goes beyond the school, and this spirit should be valued. This is the quality of innovation and transcendence in contemporary painting.

12 Gao Jianfu's Poems and Essays, Compiled by Li Weiming, Guangdong Higher Education Press, 1999.


My heart in middle age found the Way.
And I came to dwell at the foot of this mountain.
When the spirit moves, I wander alone
Amid beauty that is all for me....
I will walk till the water checks my path,
Then sit and watch the rising clouds --
And some day meet an old wood-cutter
And talk and laugh and never return.
Wang Wei

Gao Jianfu: Painting Style & Signatures

By; Zhu Wanzhang 朱万章

Translated by ;Giacomo Bruni and Claudio D. Lucchi

Gao Jianfu 高剑父 (1879-1951), born in Panyu (Guangzhou) in Guangdong province, was one of the founders of the Lingnan School of Painting 岭南画派. His birth name was Lin 麟, but he would later use various literary names, such as Lun 崙, Jue Ting 爵廷, Lao Jian 老剑, Jian Lu 剑庐. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Guangxu (1892), he studied painting under the flower-and-bird painter Ju Lian 居廉 (1828-1904), and began to learn the painting methods of flowers and plants 花卉, wild grass and insects 草虫, thus acquiring the foundations of traditional Chinese painting. In the twenty-fifth year of Guangxu (1899), Gao Jianfu continued his studies under the guide of his close friend and former learning companion, Wu Deyi 伍德彝 (1864-1928). The Wu family was a prominent family in Guangzhou in the late Qing Dynasty, and Wu Deyi's father, Wu Yanliu 伍延鎏, was also a painter. He had the possibility of study pictorial and calligraphic works of famous masters of the past. Gao Jianfu's study under Jian Lu enabled him to master the flower-and-brd painting mogu 没骨 (boneless) technique, developed by Yun Nantian 恽南田 (1633-1690) in the early Qing Dynasty. However, Gao Jianfu was not satisfied with the sole learning of traditional painting. Later, with his brother Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889-1933), Chen Shuren 陈树人 (1884-1948) and others, he moved to Japan to continue his artistic studies. During the short time they spent in Japan, they familiarised themselves with the unique pictorial techniques of Nihonga 日本画[1], also commonly known as Japanese painting, and applied them to Chinese painting. This undoubtedly innovative artistic exploration made it the forerunner in modern art history and established its position in the history of art. They combined the rendering of the environment and the contrast of light and shadow of Nihonga painting with traditional Chinese painting in order to create a fresh and natural artistic style. This kind of Chinese painting with unique visual effects was at that time called "new school of painting" 新派画 or "eclectic painting" 折衷画. That particular painting style that was later to be defined by academic circles as the "Lingnan School of Painting" by academia refers to this concept of "eclectic painting".

After Gao Jianfu and Gao Qifeng returned to China, they started to promote this emerging form of Chinese painting in various ways in order to expand its influence, among others through the establishment and publication of the True Pictorial 《真相画报》and other related editorial projects, and began for the first time to hold exhibitions in China. Just as the emergence of many new things always meets with all forms of resistance, Gao Jianfu's artistic attempts were attacked and criticised by various forces from the beginning because of the evident influence of Nihonga painting to be found in it. Some people went as far as to call it the "opposite force", deeming that it deviated from the orthodoxy of Chinese painting, thus insulting the academic tradition of Chinese painting. However, as the number of members of the Lingnan School of Painting continued to grow and their painting styles matured, their innovative spirit set on improving Chinese painting and the tireless promotion of the Gao brothers and their followers gradually caused Gao Jianfu to become more and more popular. The attention of the artistic world gave the Lingnan School of Painting a relevant historical status. To this day, when we investigate Chinese painting in the first half of the 20th century, the Lingnan School of Painting established by Gao Jianfu, Chen Shuren, and Gao Qifeng, has become an indispensable and important school. The key role they held in the context of the artistic innovation movement in the 20th century is commonly recognised in modern art history.

Most of the extant works by Gao Jianfu that are now on display were made after

1 A painting movement born at the end of the 19h century who attempted to oppose Meiji Japan's infatuation with Western culture such as the Yanghua 洋画, "Western-style painting". Nihonga painters weren't insensible to Western pictorial ideas.

his return from Japan, at a time when his style had already begun to change. Therefore, it can be said that these works testify to an already stable artistic style. But when examining Gao's style of painting, we cannot ignore the influence of his early Ju School 居派 style. In Gao Jianfu's early works, a traditional artistic tendency is evident. Some examples from this period are Two birds and crape myrtle 双鸟紫薇（1899), *Flowers, birds and insects in the manner of Luo Liangfeng* 仿罗两峰花鸟草虫, *Narcissus, Crab and Stone in the manner of Yun Shouping* 仿恽寿平水仙蟹石, Bird and Flower 花鸟（1900), *Copy of the Song Painting Lotus Pond and Grasshopper* 临宋藕塘芙蓉蚱蜢 (1901) and *Portrait of a Wealthy Person* 富贵图. These works draw their influence from various sources, such as Yun Nantian's boneless flowers or Luo Pin's 罗聘（1733-1799）"weird" 怪异 flower-and-bird paintings, and the style of rendering flowers and plants through Ju Lian's techniques of *zhuangfen* 撞粉 and *zhuangshui* 撞水 — two different ways of applying washes of ink, water and colour on paper. Others are copies of ancient masterworks and as a result, they embody profound traditional skills. For example, in *Narcissus, Crab and Stone in the manner of Yun Shouping* 仿恽寿平水仙蟹石 (Fig.1), the daffodils are painted with mogu technique and light colours, the brushwork is precise, the outline of the stone is exquisite, executed with a meticulous brushwork reflecting the brushwork of ancient masters. In the works of this period, we may see the elevated artistic skills of a Chinese painter and his ability to understand and assimilate ancient paintings. It is obviously unscientific to assert that so-called “eclectic painting" is completely unrelated to "orthodox Chinese painting”. The academic system that attacked Gao Jianfu's works, accusing him of forgetting his ancestors, denotes a fundamental lack of understanding of Gao's early works. Of

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course, had Gao Jianfu been satisfied with such works, perhaps modern Chinese painting history would merely treat him as one more mediocre Chinese painter since, artistically speaking, the above-mentioned value is only reflected inside the sphere of Chinese painting, in the cultivation of traditional painting skills and techniques.

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Generally speaking, Gao Jianfu's works from this early period are often signed "Gao Lin" 高麟, "Noble Hall", *Jue Ting* 爵庭, "Magpie Pavilion", *Que Ting* 鹊亭, "Lin" 麐. During this period, other people would often add the colophons on Gao's works, offering them gifts, mostly using in such cases the name "Jue Ting" 爵庭. The seals appearing on the works of this period are: "Gao Lin" 高, "Jue Ting" 爵庭, "Lin's Seal", *Lin Yin* 麐印, "Gao Lin's Seal", *Gao Lin Zhi Yin* 高麟之印, "Xiao Yue Qin Guan" 啸月琴馆 carved in (i.e., not in relievo) characters on square-shaped seal; "Long Live Gao Lin", *Gao Lin Changshou* 高麟长寿, "Jue Ting" 爵庭, "Lin's Seal", *Lin Yin* 麟印, "Que Pavilion", *Que Ting* 芍亭, "Addicted to painting", *Hua Pi* 画癖 in relievo characters on square-shaped seal; and "Gao" 高, "Lin" 麐 featuring both carved in and in relievo characters. A connoisseur cannot fail to know these seals. If divided by time periods, these works were created roughly before 1905, especially while he practiced painting under Ju brothers 居氏. Compared with Gao Jianfu's other periods, such works are relatively rare, hence more valuable to collectors.

Gao Jianfu's early calligraphy was also more rigorous. His calligraphy is dignified and beautiful, and his individual inscriptions even show some traces of *guange ti* 馆阁体 (official script), which concord with his painting style of the same period. What really established Gao Jianfu's dominant position in the painting school is that he combined the painting language of Japanese painting and the influence it had ab-

sorbed from Western painting concepts, in order to transform and revolutionise Chinese painting, thus forming a relatively stable style. This style was followed and passed on by his students.

Gao Jianfu's works may be roughly divided into two stages:
The first stage lasted from about 1905 to the late 1920s. During this period, Gao Jianfu studied in Japan and was influenced by the artworks of neighbouring countries, where painting was shaken by these new styles and techniques. He tried to apply such techniques to his own creation. Therefore, in his works, the Japanese painting style is the most obvious, and it was also the most attacked by his "political enemies". Most of these works are based on realism, with bright colours. The figure painting *Luofu Fragrant Dream Beauty* 《罗浮香梦美人》(Fig.2) and the mountains-and-waters painting *Kunlun after the Rain* 《昆仑雨后》(Fig.3) are typical examples. The clothes patterns, hair buns, costumes, and the hazy moods of the characters in the first are typically Japanese in their rendering, while the latter shows the mist, water vapours, mountains, streams, and the damp and refreshing breeze after the rain. The atmospheric representation is a technique commonly used by Japanese painters since the 19th century. Some scholars pointed out that the paintings of this period were entirely influenced by one particular Japanese painter, or a part of a certain painting was directly copied from a work of a Japanese painter, as some expressional methods were exactly the same as created by these painters. Some even thought that many of Gao Jianfu's paintings are in fact "patchworks" of the paintings of one or more Japanese artists. Some of his enemies also suggested out that some of these works were actually paintings without inscriptions bought on the streets of Japan, which were "used" by Gao, who simply added his own inscriptions and name. Of course, constructive criticism demonstrates that such assertions are unreasonable. The traces of copying in Gao Jianfu's works of that time are obvious. As for the accusations of so-called "plagiarism", in addition to Gao Jianfu himself, many people also wrote articles to clarify this point, believing hat history would eventually do Gao Jianfu justice, which is why I will not repeat them here. Of course, these "problems" are all "searchings" or "weaknesses" that a painter in the stage of innovation and exploration cannot avoid, but they do not hinder our understanding of his status and correct evaluation of his painting skills.

Gao Jianfu's second stage was from the late 1920s to the 1950s, and saw his artistic activities concentrate mainly in Shanghai, Guangzhou, India, and Macau. This period saw large social turmoils (such as the Sino-Japanese War, the Civil War, etc.) — historical changes which undoubtedly exerted a certain influence on his artistic style.
In terms of technique, he abandoned the dominant expressionist techniques of Nihonga painting, and returned to a limited extent to the Chinese tradition, and blended the two organically. Therefore, in the mountains-and-waters paintings, we can see both the brushwork and the environmental and atmospheric effects of Japanese paintings as well as the axe-cut texture stroke 斧劈皴 and hemp-fiber strokes 披麻皴 of the Song Dynasty, such as in the *Lonely Fishing in the Wind and Snow*《风雪独钓图》, now in the collection of the Guangdong Museum, the close-up view of the old man, the trees and the misty atmosphere bear a Japanese mark, while the distant mountains are rich in traditional dotting and texturing techniques. The flowers, the stones and grasses used as the lining of the scenery are smudged with watercolours and gouaches. At the same time, they are also mixed with water and ink, and the flowers display the use of Yun Nantian's mogu technique. The subjects of figure paintings from the previous period, which mainly focused on meticulous depicted ladies and focused on expressing the environment and atmosphere have now disappeared. In their stead, there are now mainly freehand Buddhist figures. The brushwork appears careless, but is in fact imbued with great originality, as may be seen in the figure paintings Gao Jianfu created after returning from India, such as Bodhidharma, Luohan, Guanyin, etc.

In terms of painting themes, the repertoire has become more extensive. There are not only mountains and waters, flowers and birds, and characters that express traditional themes, such as *Begonia* 《海棠图》, *Ink Bamboo* 《墨竹图》, *Autumn Mountain Master*《秋山高士图》, etc. (all collected by the

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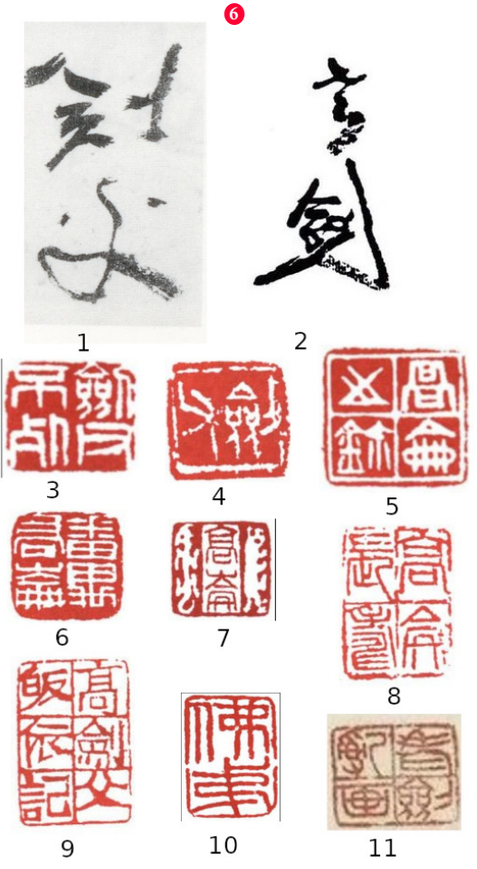
Guangdong Museum), but also modern lifestyles that reflect realistic care themes that traditional Chinese painters pay less attention to, such as wars, famines, or realistic tourist destinations, such as *Cold Smoked Isolated City* 《寒烟孤城图》(Collection of the Guangdong Provincial Museum), Flame of the East Battlefield (Collection of the Guangzhou Art Museum), *Burmese Buddhist Relics* 《缅甸佛迹》 (The Cultural Relics Collection of The Chinese University of Hong Kong), etc.

In terms of artistic conception, the author now uses freehand brushwork 大写意 to show a reckless, unrestrained and incisive attitude. Some commentators believe that his paintings are more tense than Gao Qifeng's and Chen Shuren's, mainly referring to the style of painting of this period. Among these may be mentioned *Looking afar from the tower*《倚楼极目图》(Fig.4) (collected by the Tianjin Museum), *Remnant Lotus and Wagtail*《残荷鹡鸰图》(Fig.5), *Two Eagles* 《双鹰图》(all collected by the Guangdong Museum), etc. Obviously, regardless of technique, subject matter, or artistic conception, the painting style of Gao Jianfu during this period has matured, and he has become familiar with the handling of his painting environment, gradually forming a qualitative and unique character. Gao Jianfu set up apprenticeships in Guangzhou, Macau, Hong Kong and other places, and served as a tutor of Chinese painting at the Sun Yat-Sen University, which allowed him to spread his painting style and become famous, thus becoming a leader of the Lingnan School of Painting.

The calligraphic style of this period is also completely different from the earlier period. His calligraphies appear in vivid cursive scripts in inscriptions, couplets, plaques and even books inscribed for friends. The strokes vary from thick to thin, and ink tones from thick to light. Vertical brush strokes are like old vines, while horizontal brush strokes are like dying branches. The brush appears clumsy, but in fact it is lively and unique. Gao Jianfu's calligraphic style, which appeared in the middle and late stages of his career with a weird and crazy mood, has been defined "withered vine" 枯藤体 by some commentators. Although it is said to be "dry", it does not lack in vitality, thus forming a vigorous and unique personality. Although Gao Jianfu is not famous for his calligraphy, his unique withered vine style is not uncommon even if it is placed in the group of modern calligraphers.

The signatures he used during this period are also different from his earlier ones. They mainly include "Panyu Gao Lun"番禺高崙, "Gao Lun"高崙, "Gao Jianfu"高剑父, "Jianfu"剑父 (1-2 in Fig.6), "Lun"崙, "Jian"剑 (Sword), "Ajian"阿剑, “Master Jian"剑公, "Kunlun Mountain Dweller"昆仑山民, "Kunlun Mountain Farmer"昆仑山农, "Old Jian" 老剑, etc. The commonly used seals are also richer than the earlier ones. In addition to the general name and character size, there are still many decorative seals (xianzhang 闲章) that record personal mood, behaviour, and interests. According to the author’s preliminary statistics, these seals have rectangular shape and the characters are carved in (i.e., not in relievo, 白文): “Gao Lun Longevity”高仑长寿, “Jianfu” 剑父 (4) and “Gao Lun's Seal” 高仑之鉩; carved in and in square shape:"Gao Lin" 高麟[2],“Cheerful Gao Lun” 高仑高兴, "Lingnan Jianfu" 岭南老剑, "Pick up the brush and look around the world" 提笔四顾天地窄，“Master Jian"剑公, "Jianfu's Work after Twenty (years)" 剑父二十以后之作, "Jianfu's Work after Thirty (years)"剑父卅后所作, "Jianfu's Poems, Paintings and Calligraphy""剑父诗词书画”; “Jianfu's Seal" 剑父之鉩(5), “Immortal Jianfu"剑父不死 (3)etc.[3]; in relievo 朱文， on oval-shaped seal: "Old Jian"老剑; in relievo on round-shaped seal: "Lun"仑; in relievo on square-shaped seal “Jianfu” 剑父, "Jianfu"剑甫 etc.[4]; in relievo on rectangular-shaped seal "Gao Painter" 高画士，"Gao Jianfu Conversion Record" 高剑父皈依记(9), "Buddha disciple"佛弟(10)etc.[5]; featuring both carved in and in relievo characters:



2 Except for this one, the seal used by Gao Jianfu in the early days was almost never seen again. This is something we need to pay special attention to when identifying his paintings.

3 “番禺高仑”(6)、“高仑之鉩”、“说到人情剑欲鸣”、“高蹈独往萧然自得”、“男儿生不成名身已老”

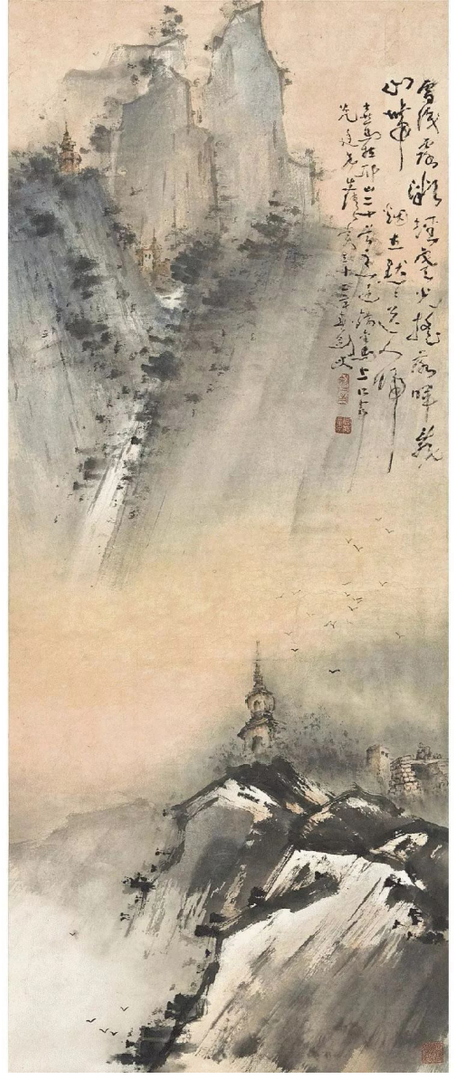
4 “高仑长寿”(8)、“剑父不死”、“仑之鉩”、“广州番禺县”、“剑父旅申时所画”、“高剑父马背船唇朱记”、“老剑乱画”(11)、“乱画哀乱世也”、“剑父”、“旅行纪念剑父持赠”

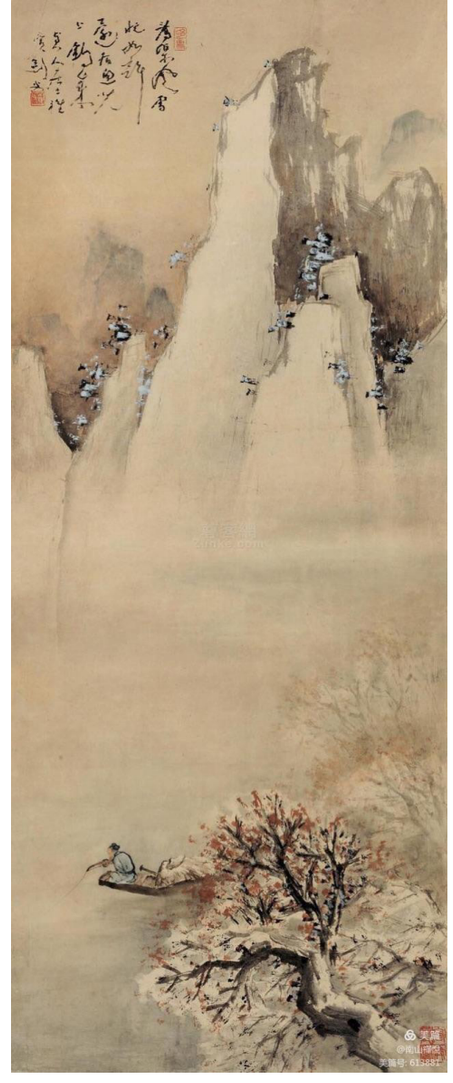
5 “高仑”(7)、“剑父”、“游艺中原”、“人共江山老”、“仑翁”

"Panyu Gaolun Seal" 番禺高仑之印.

Gao Jianfu's painting style has been carried forward through the inheritance of his followers. Like his master Ju Lian, he exerted a huge influence in the Lingnan painting circle. Among these disciples, many later became the backbone of the 20th century Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao painting circles, such as Fang Rending 方人定 (1901-1975), Su Woonong 苏卧农(1901-1975), Li Xiongcai 黎雄才(1910-2001), Guan Shanyue 关山月(1912-2000), Si Tuqi司徒奇(1904-1997), Yang Shanshen杨善深(1913-2004), etc.[6] Although their style of painting is far from the original "Eclectic School" period, as the artistic descendants of Gao Jianfu, they have become the main representatives of the contemporary Lingnan School of Painting.

6 Zhao Chongzheng赵崇正(1910-1968), He Lei何磊(1916-1978), Li Fuhong 李抚虹(1902-1990), Wu Peirong伍佩荣(1910-1979), Luo Zhuping罗竹坪(1911-2002)





Zhu Wanzhang 朱万章, born in Meishan, Sichuan, graduated from the History Department of Sun Yat-Sen University中山大学 of Guangzhou, and the Chinese National Academy of Arts 中国艺术研究院, in Beijing, with a doctorate degree. He is currently a research librarian of the National Museum of China 中国国家博物馆 and a member of the Theory Committee of the Chinese Artists Association 中国美术家协会. He is engaged in the collection of works of Chinese calligraphy and painting, art history research and art review. He is the author of more than twenty volumes such us: *Calligraphy and Painting Appreciation and Art History Research*《书画鉴考与美术史研究》, *Focus on the History of Painting and Calligraphy Appreciation and Collection*《销夏与清玩：以书画鉴藏史为中心》, *Authenticity and Falsification of Calligraphy and Painting*《书画鉴真与辨伪》, *Records of Paintings*《鉴画积微录》, *On Calligraphy and Painting in the Ming and Qing Dynasties*《明清书画谈丛》,*A Collection of Books on the Centennial Painting Garden*《尺素清芬：百年画苑书札丛考》, *A Study of Painting and Calligraphy Appreciation Since the Song and Yuan Dynasties*《过眼与印记：宋元以来书画鉴藏考》, *Meeting in Paintings: A New Record of Artistic Events in the Past Hundred Years*《画里相逢：百年艺事新见录》, *The Universe Beyond the Painting: Notes on Calligraphy and Painting Collection Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties*《画外乾坤：明清以来书画鉴藏琐记》.

Zhu Wanzhang is also known as a painter and reputed for his depictions of gourds. Various albums regarding his works have been published like: *One Gourd and One World: Zhu Wanzhang's Painting Collection*《一葫一世界：朱万章画集》, and *Study and Art: Zhu Wanzhang and His Art World*《学・艺：朱万章和他的艺术世界》.

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